# The Words of God to Prophet Muhammad: Forty Sacred Sayings

(Ahadith Qudsiyyah)

Drawn from

Ayatullah Hasan Shirazi

*Kalimat Allah*

Translated by

John Andrew Morrow

Commentary by

Charles Upton

Great Books of the Islamic World

"Whoever memorizes and preserves forthy hadith relating to religion," said the Prophet Muhammad, "God will resurrect that person on the Day of Judgment as a jurist and religious scholar." Inspired by this and similar sayings, early Muslims endeavored to organize and publish prophetic traditions in sets of forties on specific subject matters. If most traditions consists of saying of the Prophet Muhammad, the current compilation, which was drawn from Ayatullah Hasan Shirazi's *Kalimat Allah*, brings together a special sort of tradition, the sacred saying or *hadith qudsi*, in which the Messenger of God reports extra-Quranic revelation, namely, the Word of God, that was shared with him directly by the Divinity or via the intermediary of the Angel Gabriel. The compilation in queston has been transmitted consecutively through spiritual and scholarly lines since the early days of Islam and treated as trustworthy by many specialists of tradition. Translated idiomatically, accurately, and elegantly by Dr. John Andrew Morrow, and commented upon by Charles Upton with depth and concision, *The Words of God to Prophet Muhammad: Forty Sacred Sayings* is a priceless gem of Islamic spirituality and a masterpiece of Arabic eloquence that should find its place in every Muslim and non-Muslim home.

The translator, Dr. John Andrew Morrow, is a Metis Canadian academic, senior scholar of Islam and a full professor of foreign languages. He is author of *The Covenants of the Prophet Muhammad with the Christians of the World* and numerous other works.

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# THE WORDS OF GOD TO PROPHET MUḤAMMAD: FORTY SACRED SAYINGS (*AḤADĪTH QUDSIYYAH*)

الأحاديث الأربعون القدسية

Drawn from Ayatullāh Ḥasan Shīrāzī's

*Kalimāt Allāh*

Translated by John Andrew Morrow

Edited by John Andrew Morrow, Amar Sellam, and Said Mentak

Commentary by Charles Upton

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface: A Short Survey of Sacred Sayings
Sources for Seekers
Genesis of the Book
Acknowledgements
Foreword
ḤADĪTH 1: I wonder how a person...
ḤADĪTH 2: My Self witnesses by My Self…
ḤADĪTH 3: He who is content…
ḤADĪTH 4: He who starts his day greedy for this world…
ḤADĪTH 5: Do not be like the one…
ḤADĪTH 6: I did not create you so as to lift Myself…
ḤADĪTH 7: I did not create you in vain…
ḤADĪTH 8: O sons of dinars and dirhams!
ḤADĪTH 9: Do not curse My creatures…
ḤADĪTH 10: Verily, the truth has been revealed…
ḤADĪTH 11: Verily, this world is a house…
ḤADĪTH 12: Remember My favors…
ḤADĪTH 13: Obey Me to the extent of your needs…
ḤADĪTH 14: How many candles…
ḤADĪTH 15: Why do you say that which you do not do?
ḤADĪTH 16: I am Ever-Living…
ḤADĪTH 17: To what extent will you forget Me?
ḤADĪTH 18: Be patient and I will elevate you…
ḤADĪTH 19: There is no reason without thought…
ḤADĪTH 20: Look at yourself…
ḤADĪTH 21: Death will reveal your character…
ḤADĪTH 22: Remember God abundantly…
ḤADĪTH 23: Verily, Satan is your open enemy…
ḤADĪTH 24: God bears witness that…
ḤADĪTH 25: Collect provision…
ḤADĪTH 26: How could you disobey Me?
ḤADĪTH 27: How could you be pleased with…this world?
ḤADĪTH 28: Wealth is Mine…
ḤADĪTH 29: Be careful of your duty to God…
ḤADĪTH 30: As much as your heart desires…
ḤADĪTH 31: Remember Me…
ḤADĪTH 32: Your death laughs at your desires…

ḤADĪTH 33: You desire and I desire...
ḤADĪTH 34: My angels are watching you night and day
ḤADĪTH 35: Do not be pleased with your wealth...
ḤADĪTH 36: Be generous...
ḤADĪTH 37: Behave with people...
ḤADĪTH 38: You wake up every day...
ḤADĪTH 39: Make your heart agree with your tongue...
ḤADĪTH 40: Do not disobey and ask me for forgiveness...

# المحتويات


مراجعة موجزة لكتاب الأحاديث القدسية

مصادر للباحثين

ظروف نشأة هذا العمل

تصدير

اعترافات

الحديث 1 : عَجِبْتُ لِمَنْ...

الحديث 2 : شَهِدَتْ نَفْسِي...

الحديث 3 : مَنْ قَنَع اسْتَغْنَى يَابْنَ آدَمَ

الحديث 4 : يَابْنَ آدَمَ مَنْ أَصْبَحَ حَرِيصاً...

الحديث 5 : يَابْنَ آدَمَ لا تَكُنْ مِمَّنْ يَطْلُبُ التَّوْبَةَ بِطُولِ الأَمَلِ...

الحديث 6 : يَابْنَ آدَمَ مَا خَلَقْتُكُمْ لأَسْتَكْثِر..

الحديث 7 : يَا عَبِيدَ الدَّنَانِير...

الحديث 8 : يَابْنَ آدَمَ إِنّي لَم أَخْلُقْكُمْ عَبَثاً...

الحديث 9 : يَابْنَ آدَمَ لاَ تَلْعَنُوا الْمَخْلُوقِينَ...

الحديث 10 : يَابْنَ آدَمَ قَد جَاءَكُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ...

الحديث 11 : يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ...

الحديث 12 : يَابْنَ آدَمَ أُذْكُروا نِعْمَتِي...

الحديث 13 : يَابْنَ آدَمَ أَطِيعُونِى بِقَدْرِ حَوَائِجِكُمْ...

الحديث 14 : يَابْنَ آدَمَ كَمْ مِنْ سِرَاجٍ أَطْفَأَتْهُ الرِّيحُ...

الحديث 15 : يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا...

الحديث 16 : يَابْنَ آدَمَ إِعْمَلْ بِمَا أَمَرْتُكَ...

الحديث 17 : يَابْنَ آدَمَ إِلى كَمْ تَشْكُونِي...

الحديث 18 : يَابْنَ آدَمَ إِصْبِرْ...

الحديث 19 : يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ...

الحديث 20 : يَابْنَ آدَمَ اَلْمَوْتُ يَكْشِفُ أَسْرَارَكَ...
الحديث 21 : يَابْنَ آدَمَ انْظُرْ إِلَى نَفْسِكَ...
الحديث 22 : يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكراً كثِيراً...
الحديث 23 : يَابْنَ آدَمَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ...
الحديث 24 : شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ...
الحديث 25 : يَابْنَ آدَمَ أَكْثِرْ مِنَ الزَّادِ...
الحديث 26 : يَا بَنِي آدَمَ...
الحديث 27 : يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كَيْفَ رَغِبْتُمْ...
الحديث 28 : تَعَالَى يَابْنَ آدَمَ اَلْمَالُ مَالِي...
الحديث 29 : يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ...
الحديث 30 : يَا بْنَ آدَمَ بِقَدْرِ مَا يَمِيلُ قَلْبُكَ...
الحديث 31 : يَا بْنَ آدَمَ أُذْكُرْنِي...
الحديث 32 : يَا بْنَ آدَمَ أَجَلُكَ يَضْحَكُ بِأَمَلِكَ...
الحديث 33 : يَا بْنَ آدَمَ تُرِيدُ وَأُرِيدُ...
الحديث 34 : يَابْنَ آدَمَ مَلاَئِكَتِي يَتَعَاقَبُونَ بِاللَّيْلِ...
الحديث 35 : تَعَالَى يَا بْنَ آدَمَ لاَ تَفْرَحْ بِالْغِنَاءِ...
الحديث 36 : يَا بْنَ آدَمَ كُنْ سَخِيّاً فَإِنَّ...
الحديث 37 : يَا بْنَ آدَمَ أَحْسِنْ خُلُقَكَ مَعَ النَّاسِ...
الحديث 38 : يَا بْنَ آدَمَ إِذَا أَصْبَحْتَ بَيْنَ نِعْمَتَيْنِ...
الحديث 39 : يَا بْنَ آدَمَ إِجْعَلْ قَلْبَكَ...
الحديث 40 : يَا بْنَ آدَمَ لا تَعْصِنِي...

## PREFACE:

## A SHORT SURVEY OF SACRED SAYINGS

*By John Andrew Morrow*

The sources of Islām are two: the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. The first source, the Qur'ān, contains the Word of God revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad on the Mountain of Light in the month of Ramaḍān of the year 610 CE. The entire content of the Qur'ān was revealed to the Messenger of God at that time by means of the Archangel Gabriel. It would continue to be revealed gradually, in response to specific situations, over the course of the next twenty-two years. As the very embodiment of the Revealed Word, the Prophet Muḥammad was the receptacle of the Revelation. If the totality of truth was revealed to him at once, it was only shared with the believers in divinely-determined steps and stages. This Qur'ān or Recital was protected by Almighty God. Authored by God and protected by God, it is the literal, created, Word of God. The second source, the Sunnah, refers to the Word of the Prophet Muḥammad. Known also as the *ḥadīth*, the Sunnah encompasses the sayings and actions of the Messenger of God. Although divine in origin, the teachings of the Prophet were not protected by Divine Promise. Since they were subject to the vicissitudes of both oral and written tradition, and were passed down by fallible and fault-ridden human beings, the *ḥadīth* is very much the Word of Man. This is not to say that oral tradition cannot be trusted. As Robert G. Hoyland has confirmed, "recent studies have demonstrated how pre-literate peoples can effectively preserve their traditions over the course of centuries, and this has constrained the discussion to the issue of minor contamination rather than that of major fabrication" (212). If Muslims must accept the Qur'ān completely, totally, and unquestionably, the same expectation cannot be made of the Sunnah. Before accepting and acting upon the *ḥadīth*, they must be subjected to stringent study and their authenticity duly determined. As trustworthy as any traditions may be, the Sunnah can only come second to the Qur'ān as a source of divine guidance and

legislation. The Qur'ān and the Sunnah are not co-equal: the Qur'ān comes first and the Sunnah comes second.

If most of the Sunnah conveys the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muḥammad, it also contains a fascinating feature known as *aḥadīth qudsiyyah*, namely, sacred or divine sayings. Unlike traditional traditions, in which the Prophet is reported to have said such and such a thing on such and such an occasion, the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah*, which are also know as *aḥadīth ilāhiyyah* and *rabbāniyyah*, relate revelations that are not contained in the Qur'ān. As a person in continuous communion with the Divine, the Messenger of God received revelations in various forms destined for various formats. As the Prophet said himself: "I have been given the Book and with it something similar" (Abū Dawūd qtd. Graham 60). Much of this revelation, which was dictated by the Archangel Gabriel, contributed to the composition of the Quran, a process protected by the Promise of God. On other occasions, however, the Creator communicated directly with the Prophet through divine speech, dreams, and visions, revealing him rich spiritual teachings. At other times, Almighty God shared with Muḥammad, the Messenger of God, messages He had shared with previous prophets and messengers, such as Moses and Jesus. These divine or sacred sayings contain characteristics which distinguish them from both the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. For Nawawī, the main distinction between both forms of revelation was that the former was a "recited revelation" whereas the latter was "revelation reported by Muḥammad from his Lord" (qtd. Graham 59).

The Qur'ān, of course, is the Word of God revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad by means of the Archangel Gabriel to serve as God's final revelation for humankind. It is Islām's Holy Book whose content was protected by Almighty God. The Sunnah refers to the words and deeds of the Messenger of God and is preceded by the formula: "The Messenger of God said." While the teachings of the Prophet were divine, the words he employed to convey them were human. Unlike the Qur'ān, then, the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* are not a linguistic and literary miracle although they are undoubtedly inspired by God. As the Qur'ān says, the Prophet "does not speak by whim" (53:3). Consequently,

> Many Muslims explain that the sayings of Muḥammad are, like the Qur'ān, revealed by God; but in this instance, the revealed message is couched in the Prophet's own words rather than those of God. For that reason the ḥadīths are second in authority, so that, for example, one cannot rely on a ḥadīth to abrogate a scriptural injunction. In case of an apparent conflict between Qur'ān and a ḥadīth on a particular issue, one accepts the scriptural text as definitive. (Renard 14)

As Joseph E. Lowry explains, "the corpus of traditions from the Prophet, although it is divinely inspired, represents Muḥammad's own direct contribution to the material sources of Islāmic law" (83). These sayings, however, which were passed down for centuries prior to being collected and authenticated, are not divinely protected despite the demonstrably false claims of Mawlānā Mawdūdī. For this distinguished Pakistani scholar, "The God who preserved his last book also arranged for the preservation of the example and guidance of his last Prophet" (qtd Brown 248). It was not God, but men, and in some cases, women, who preserved and passed down the sayings attributed to the Prophet. As such, their reliability must be determined according to a rigorous scholarly methodology.

As for the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah*, they are traditions in which the Prophet relates what Almighty God taught him. In this case, it is the Word of God conveyed through the Word of the Prophet. The meaning is from God but the words are from the Messenger of God. In some instances, the chain of narration goes beyond the Prophet Muḥammad to Gabriel (Graham 78). Unlike the Qur'ān, the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* are not an inimitable miracle, however eloquent they may be. On this issue, all parties are in agreement. As al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī explains in his lexicon *al-Ta'rīfāt*,

> A sacred *ḥadīth* is, as to the meaning, from God, the Almighty; as to the wording, it is from the Messenger of God may the blessings and peace of God be upon him. It is that which God, the Almighty, has communicated to His Prophet through revelation or in dream, and he,

> peace be upon him, has communicated it in his own words. Thus, the Qur'ān is superior to it because, besides being revealed, it is His wording. (qtd. Ibrāhīm & Johnson-Davies 8)

Although the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* do not possess the quality of inimitability, they are, nonetheless, literary masterpieces in the Arabic language. Rich in rhetorical devices and absolutely immersed in allusions to the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, the sacred sayings employ an evocative, yet crystalline, language. In a certain sense, the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* convey the content of the Qur'ān and the spiritual and ethical teachings of Islām in a simplified format which is easily understandable to the average reader, both young and old. While only the most erudite of Arabic scholars could completely comprehend the recitation of the Qur'ān, the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* were more universally accessible, for which reason they were employed as some sort of divinely-delivered didactic device. Since they are relatively short, rarely reaching more than one page, and make repeated use of anaphora, they were easily committed to memory.

In terms of their content, the sacred sayings stress the doctrine of divine unity, religious obligations, morality and virtue, devotion to God, and preparation for the Hereafter (Ibrāhīm and Johnson-Davies 17-18). To the surprise of many scholars who insist that such sayings were produced by spiritually-obsessed Ṣūfīs, the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* promote good, forbid evil, admonish oppressors and exploiters, and provide some profound social, political, and economic principles. Following the example of the Qur'ān, which urges believers to think over eight hundred times, the sacred sayings also contain a large number of rhetorical questions. In other words, they represent a sort of dialogue between the Divine and His disciples. Like the Qur'ān, God speaks directly to human beings in the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah*, addressing different constituents of society, including the poor and the rich, farmers, workers and business people, men and women, adults and children, as well as the free and the enslaved. The pedagogical purpose of these questions is clear: to incite human beings to engage in self-reflection. In this sense, the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* encourage

introspection and spiritual self-improvement. They are works that truly touch the heart.

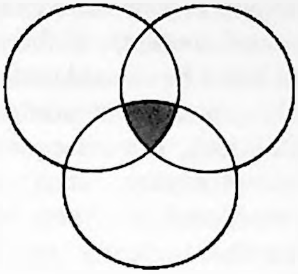
Despite the fact that the sacred sayings are rooted in the Qur'ān, a distinction must always be maintained between them. For Nawawī, the Qur'ān was inimitable and preserved from change and alteration. It was also unique in the fact that its recitation was full of blessings. As for the sacred sayings, they were isolated reports which formed part of God's speech (*kalām Allāh*]. These were sayings ascribed to the Prophet, who reported them, as opposed to the Qur'ān, which was ascribed only to God. If it is God who speaks in the Qur'ān, it is the Prophet who says that God says in the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah*. Furthermore, if the Qur'ān was the product of *waḥī* or revelation as dictated by Gabriel, the sacred sayings were rooted in direct revelation from God without the intermediary of the Archangel, dream-visions, and implantation in the heart (Graham 59-60). Although the sacred sayings are of divine origin, they are distinguished from the Qur'ān by means of delivery. They also have a different authoritative status. As John Renard explains,

> This Sacred Ḥadīth remains distinct from the divine utterances that make up the Qur'ān and is of decidedly secondary--some Muslims would even say tertiary--authority. Many of these traditions appear as separate sayings or are integrated into Prophetic Ḥadīth in the standard editions... Others are considered extracanonical but have nevertheless achieved wide popularity. Sacred ḥadīths are most significant in the present context for the light they shed on the emotional tone of Islāmic spirituality. The sayings tend to emphasize God's immanence and accessibility, and highlight the possibility of a loving relationship between creature and Creator. Precisely because some sacred ḥadīths seem to lean too far toward divine immanence, thus compromising God's transcendence, many Muslims have considered them spurious. They represent, nevertheless, some of the most beautiful and popular crystallizations of an important dimension of the Islāmic spiritual genius. (Renard 16)

While some individual sacred sayings may be spurious, the entire body of *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* cannot be disgarded. This is tantamount to throwing out the baby with the bath water. One does not spray herbicide on one's entire vegetable garden, thus killing everything it contains, on account of a few weeds. Some scholars, it seems, engage in retrospective reading; namely, they reject early narrations if they do not agree with their modern views. If one is opposed to Ṣūfism, then, by extension, any tradition that has the slightest scent of Ṣūfism is denounced as spurious. As Graham has shown, however, "the Divine Saying is not a late blossom of some 'movement' called 'Ṣūfism'" (110). The sacred sayings that were supposedly forged by Ṣūfīs several centuries after the Prophet are actually found in the oldest and most authoritative collections of prophetic traditions (69-70). For Graham, this is "strong argument for the deep roots of Ṣūfī piety in early Muslim spirituality and the prophetic-revelatory event itself" (110). In the estimation of Graham,

> the frequent incidence of Divine Sayings in the earliest Ḥadīth materials and the fact that they reflect those concerns that were later associated with *taṣawwuf*, or mystical piety, is another argument for the deep roots of *taṣawwuf* in the earliest forms of Muslim piety. (Graham 69)

Since *taṣawwuf* is rooted in the reality of the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, John L. Esposito is mistaken to claim that "Ṣūfism began as a reform movement in response to the growing materialism and wealth of Muslim society" (57). Ṣūfism is the very essence of Islām. *'Irfān* is the inner heart of Islām. It is the harmonizing totality of both spirit and law. In my opinion, True Islām is to be found at the center of what is called Sunnism, Shī'ism, and Ṣūfism. It is *ahl al-sunnah, ahl al-bayt* and *ahl al-taṣawwuf.*



The center of Islām: the conjuncture between Sunnism, Shī'ism and Ṣūfism

Although sacred sayings expound upon a multitude of moral and ethical subjects, all of which can serve as foundational legal principles, jurists of all schools of law have generally avoided them in their formulation of *fiqh* or Islāmic jurisprudence. These jurisconsults may have had qualms about the sacred sayings, viewing them as sources of spiritual guidance as opposed to law. They may also have entertained doubts about their authenticity. This is unfortunate for, as Graham, has shown:

> the Divine Saying has as venerable a lineage in Islāmic tradition as any other kind of report preserved in the Ḥadīth. Their existence in these works is a confirmation of their essential equal status as 'authentic' segments of the Ḥadīth alongside other reports that entered likewise into the major collections. (83)

While there are some scholars, like the late Ayatullāh Ḥasan al-Shīrāzī, who claim that the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* or sacred sayings are the "pure Word of God" (18) such a position is both intellectually untenable and potentially perilous. One can claim that the Qur'ān is divinely protected because Almighty God Himself has promised to protect it. As Almighty God says, "Truly, We have revealed the Scripture and We shall preserve it" (15:9). There is no basis in the Qur'ān or Sunnah for the belief that those *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* are divinely-protected by God. The Qur'ān requires no chain of authority for authentication as what appears between its bindings is the same that was revealed to the Messenger of God. The same cannot be said of the *ḥadīth* literature, in general, and the *ḥadīth qudsī* literature, in

particular. The authenticity of any sacred saying is predicated on its chain of narration and contents. If the chain of narration is false, then the content must be considered false. If the chain of narration is correct, but its content contradicts the Qur'ān or other authenticated traditions, it must equally be rejected. Even allegedly authentic sacred sayings, such as those contained in *101 Ḥadīth Qudsī*, translated by Syed Maṣood-ul-Ḥasan are simply saturated with theologically incorrect content. Their chains may be *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan* according to Sunnī standards; however, the teachings that many of them convey are in complete contradiction with the Qur'ān, the authentic Sunnah, and the example of the Household of the Prophet.

To claim that the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* are the Word of God is to exalt a body of *ḥadīth* to the same level as the Qur'ān. This is problematic, to say the least, as the distinction cannot be greater. Unlike the Qur'ān, explains al-Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī al-Harawī, which was revealed by God through the Angel Gabriel, the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* were the result of revelation (*waḥy*), inspiration (*ilhām*), and dreams (*manām*) (qtd. Ibrāhīm & Johnson Davies 8; Graham 61). Unlike the Qur'ān, which was transmitted by *tawātur*, namely, multiple transmissions through every generation, the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* were passed down by single individuals (*aḥad*) (Ibrāhīm & Johnson Davies 8, 10; Graham 61). Unlike the Qur'ān, the recitation of which is required during ritual prayers, the use of *ḥadīth qudsī* in such instances is not permitted (qtd. Ibrāhīm & Johnson-Davies 8). Unlike the Qur'ān, one can touch the words of the *ḥadīth qudsī* without being in a state of ritual purity with the exception of the name God evidently (8). And, unlike the Qur'ān, one can reject the content of the *ḥadīth qudsī* without falling into infidelity (8).

As Ibrāhīm and Johnson-Davies observe, there are many minor differences between the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth qudsī*. For example, the Qur'ān is divided into chapters and verses while the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* are not; the ten-fold reward promised for reciting the Qur'ān does not apply to the *ḥadīth qudsī*; and that the prohibition of paraphrasing the Qur'ān is not applicable to the *aḥadīth*. Hence, Shīrāzī's claim that the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* are *ṣinwā al-Qur'ān* or "the brother of the Qur'ān" that "helped perfect the task of the Qur'ān" (18) is clearly incorrect. The

Qur'ān is perfect in and of itself. The Qur'ān can exist without the *ḥadīth* but the *ḥadīth* cannot exist without the Qur'ān, for anything and everything in the Sunnah finds its origin in the Qur'ān. The Prophet, after all, was the Qur'ān walking, the very human manifestation of the Revelation. Not only was Muḥammad in the Qur'ān, the Qur'ān was in Muḥammad. Hence, anything he said or did was in accordance with the Qur'ān. It is also inappropriate to refer to the *ḥadīth qudsī* as "the brother of the Qur'ān" since brothers are equal in origin. The Qur'ān, however, is peerless. Besides being awkward, Shīrāzī's simile can easily be called into question.

Assuming that the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth qudsī* are actually brothers, they are certainly not twins. The distinction, therefore, is not simply one of literary incomparability; it is of authority. The Qur'ān, as the divinely-protected *parole de Dieu*, is legimitized and legitimate, guarded and safe-guarded. No scholar worth the turban on his head has ever suggested that the *aḥadīth* have been preserved intact from the time of the Prophet to the time of their canonization. Even the lowest ranking cleric and the most minor of mullahs are cognizant of the fact that traditions were falsified by the hundreds of thousands. Many of the sacred sayings found in Sunnī sources are related on the authority of individuals who are untrustworthy, many of whom were notorious liars. If some traditions were falsified from the onset, namely, by the very first narrators found in their chains, some were introduced into the corpus of Islāmic traditions by Jews and Christians who attributed Biblical and apocryphal sayings to the Prophet Muḥammad, while others were concocted by Ṣūfīs who were especially fond of the *ḥadīth qudsī* genre. As for the Ṣūfīs, some simply invented sayings to support their devotional practices. Other Ṣūfīs claim to have learned traditions directly from the Prophet, God Himself, or even Celestial Bodies through the process of "unveiling." While such vertical inspiration may be veridic, it is certainly not verifiable from a scholarly standpoint.

This is not to say that the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* are false and that they are purely the Word of Man devoid of any derivation from the Divine. There is no denying that the authentic sacred sayings were authored by God. In this sense, they are very much

the Word of God. The issue, then, is not whether they are the Word of God in theory but whether they are to be treated as the Word of God in practice. Since the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* vary in authenticity, how, then, do we deal with them as a category? One cannot claim that the entire body of *ḥadīth qudsī* is the Word of God. With the Qur'ān, one cannot accept *Sūrah al-Baqarah* while rejecting *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*. With the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah*, however, one can reject a certain tradition or a certain book of traditions while accepting others as authentic. With the Qur'ān, it is take it or leave it. Either you accept it as entirely authentic, as is required of any *bona fide* believer, or you reject it and you are cast into disbelief. The same approach simply cannot apply to the *ḥadīth qudsī*. This is simply to say that each tradition must be evaluated on the basis of its own intrinsic merit, including chain of transmission and content. As such, some sacred sayings are *ṣaḥīḥ*, namely, authentic, while others are *ḥasan*, good; *ḍa'īf*, weak; *mursal*, broken; or *mawdu'*, fabricated, among many other possible classifications.

The forty traditions in this current compilation were considered to be reliable by Ayatullāh Ḥasan al-Shīrāzī. Still, scholarly standards demand due documentation of sources. Since Shīrāzī was a populist, perhaps his *Kalimāt Allāh* [*Word of God*] was aimed as inculcating Islāmic ideas and ethics among the Muslim masses. The failure to include sources for these forty traditions gives the impression that the work is of indisputable authenticity, an attitude reserved for anti-intellectual absolutists and essentialists. In the scholarly tradition of Islām, there is no such thing as a source that is stamped as "100% *ṣaḥīḥ*." Research and scholarship is an unending journey and a perpetual process. Sources must always be subject to scrutiny. As such, Shīrāzī's failure to include the chains of authority and narration for these forty *ḥadīth qudsī* is a serious academic shortcoming. Shīrāzī, however, did include chains of narration, some complete and some incomplete, for the rest of the traditions in his voluminous *Kalimāt Allāh* [*Word of God*]. While they may be of little value to lay readers, it is important to understand that the value of any *ḥadīth* is no greater than the chain by which it is conveyed. It is this understanding that prevents the true of heart

from falsely attributing words to the Prophet Muḥammad, the Infallibles or Almighty God.

While faith is the foundation of our science, reason is the root of all religion. If blind faith is as perilous as pure reason, a balance between *'imān* and *'aql* assures spiritual and intellectual equilibrium. Shaykh al-Mufīd, for example, "believed that rational investigation was an essential tool for determining a correct belief, and he abandoned his teacher Ibn Bābawayh's reliance on using *aḥad* reports from the Imāms as evidence in many issues" (Brown 131). It comes as no surprise then that Shīrāzī's *Kalimāt God* has caused some controversy in scholarly circles for the simple fact that it contains a large quantity of *aḥad* and *mursal* traditions. As Graham explains, "*al-aḥad* in Muslim scholarship refers to that which has been transmitted by some authorities, but not by so many of them as to preclude the report's being false or deficient" (75, note 45). As for *mursal* traditions, they are those which contain incomplete chains of narration; namely, they trace back only to a Follower, and not a Companion of the Prophet (Graham 73, note 13).

This critical approach, which combines both faith and science, is certainly more sound, and sane, than the annihilative approach of Western academics who, to put things as subtly as possible, are professional liars on the pay-roll of Satan. For these hardened atheists and infidels, there is no such thing as truth, be it absolute or otherwise. Since they cannot and will not believe, they wish to drag as many as they can into their dark dungeons of disbelief. "The sacred sayings are fake; the *ḥadīth* literature is fake; the Qur'ān is fake; the Prophet was a fake..." So goes their litany of lies. Deaf, dumb, and blind, this spawn of Satan cannot see truth and beauty for what it is. They focus on issues of origin knowing full well that such things can never be proven either in favor or against. They claim the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* were copied from the Bible, apocryphal sources, and oral tradition ignoring that similarity is not evidence of plagiarism but rather support for a common source: Almighty God. They overlook the literary value of the sacred sayings which, in and of itself, merits classifying them as classics of world literature. And they are oblivious to the overwhelming good that emanates from such literature.

As Jonathan Brown has explained, "Western criticism of the ḥadīth tradition can be viewed as an act of domination in which one worldview asserts its power over another by dictating the terms by which 'knowledge' and 'truth' are established" (198). In reality, "[t]he Authenticity Question is part of a broader debate over the power dynamic between 'Religion' and 'Modernity,' and between 'Islām' and 'the West' (198). As Brown recognizes, "the ḥadīth tradition is so vast and our attempts to evaluate its authenticity so inevitably limited to small samples, that any attitudes towards its authenticity are necessarily based more on our critical worldview than on empirical fact" (198). As Seyyed Ḥossein Naṣr explains,

> Traditional Islām does not reject Ḥadīth because it does not accord with the modern world's conception of historical causality and philosophical historicism and the diluted meaning of revelation that has now penetrated even into modern Western religious thought. It relies upon the critical methods of Ḥadīth scholarship as cultivated over the centuries by traditional Muslim scholars of Ḥadīth, based as they are on both the historical continuity of the tradition and the *barakah* that protects the truth within a tradition as long as that tradition is alive. Traditional Islāmic scholarship is also open to the consideration of all critical appraisals of the Ḥadīth corpus, as long as the criticism is not based on the assumption that what has left no traces in written records does not exist. The traditional perspective always remembers the famous principle of Islāmic philosophy that…'The nonexistence of awareness of something is not proof of its nonexistence.' (5)

As much damage as they may have done by disseminating their destructive theories on the "origins" of Islām, "[t]he substantial core of early material in the Ḥadīth was early recognized by Aloyes Sprenger" and even "Goldziher…himself recognized…the existence of a 'Grundstock' of reports in the Ḥadīth that orginated with the Prophet and his contemporaries" (Graham 4). As Graham explains, "Johann Fück… and, still

later, James Robson...both emphasized the genuine elements and basic reliability of the Ḥadīth as a repository not only of late forgeries but also of early Islāmic traditional material" (4). In other words, many of the Western researchers who stressed that the Ḥadīth was not historical came full circle. Ultimately, they came to the same conclusion that Muslim Ḥadīth scholars had come to centuries earlier; namely, "there is gold in them there hills." In other words, there are precious stones of truth among millions of worthless rocks. Graham seems almost surprised that the classical Ḥadīth, in both its authentic and fabricated forms, dates back to the middle of the eight century as opposed to the ninth century or later as Western scholars had supposed (1). "While modern scholars have generally dismissed these 'divine sayings' as late, "Ṣūfī" forgeries," Graham admits that he "soon discovered that a considerable number of these reports were to be found in the earliest Ḥadīth collections" (vii). Far from being fabrications dating from centuries after the passing of the Prophet, "the Divine Saying appears to be an early, even 'primitive' element in Islāmic Tradition" (Graham 109).

Since the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* contain sayings from the Prophet Muḥammad along with Qur'ānic verses, they appear, to the dry academic eye, as a *pot-pourri* compiled *post-factum*. They are what Muslim *muḥaddithūn* or *ḥadīth* specialists refer to as composite traditions; namely, disparate traditions on a similar theme which are collated and presented as a cohesive whole. All of the sayings may have existed independently and have been expertly verified. Their authenticity, then, is not subject to question. What is novel, however, is that they have been merged together for some spiritual or didactic purpose. Such a phenomenon, however, can also be interpreted differently. It is possible that many of the single sentence sayings found in the major books of traditions originally formed part of more elaborate discourses pronounced by the Prophet. Different individuals remembered only part of the speeches they heard in the mosque of the Messenger of God. Out of an entire sermon, one may only have remembered, decades after the fact, but a single saying. Perhaps scholars were not simply attempting to reconstruct the complete discourses. Perhaps these entire

discourses remained in circulation. In other words, they existed both as fragments and as wholes.

Orientalists who undermine the holy *ḥadīth* ultimately do so to their own detriment since truth is truth regardless of its outward form and origin. As William A. Graham comprehends, "The most crucial kind of 'authenticity' of a scripture or anything else of religious significance is, in the final analysis, its absolute authenticity in the understanding and faith of a particular individual or a particular group in a particular age" (2). In truth, virtually all traditions with sound chains of narration trace back to the Prophet via his Companions. For Orientalists, the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* are lies that came later, centuries later. As far as believing Muslim scholars are concerned, the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah*, so long as they are sound in chain of narration and meaning, can be considered the Word of God in the sense that they were inspired by God. Although the *'ulamā'* agree that the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* were revealed to the Messenger of God, and the meaning was inspired by God, they differ, however, as to whether the words were divinely dictated or whether the Prophet put the meaning in his own words. As we have seen, some scholars, such as Ḥasan al-Shīrāzī, and even Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, believe that the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* are divine in word and content. As Akhthar Rizvī expressed in *The Qur'ān and Ḥadīth*, "the words and meanings are both from God" (qtd. Baqrī iii). Although this position is shared by some Sunnī scholars, who "hold that both the meaning and the wording of Divine Sayings were given to Muḥammad by God (Graham 62)," others argue that while the meaning is from God, the wording is from the Prophet. As M.M. A'ẓamī explains, "[t]he meaning of these *aḥadīth* was revealed to the Prophet who put them in his own expression" (44). While the meaning was from God, the actual wording of the sacred sayings was the product of the Prophet's personal effort and *ijtihād* (Graham 62). For A'ẓamī, "[t]he Holy Qur'ān is the real word of Almighty God and the Prophet had only to receive it and then to teach it to the people, explain it and act accordingly" (44).

While both the first and second schools of scholars believe that the meaning of the *ḥadīth qudsī* is from God, the divergence

between both groups revolves around the wording (Ibrāhīm & Johnson-Davies 11). For the first school, the wording was revealed by God while for the second group it was inspired (11). There are also scholars, like ʻAlī Mishkīnī, who belong to a third school, which combines aspects from the two prior schools. For Mishkīnī, "*ḥadīth qudsī*...is also the word of God, the Exalted, but its words are of the kind which were also revealed-to the former prophets." In other words, the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* are the word of God, both in content and wording; however the wording in the sacred sayings belongs to a distinct category of divine speech. Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ, who spear-heads a fourth group, stresses that sacred sayings were not sent down as revelation nor were they usual ḥadīth: they were actually exhortations (*mawāʼiẓ*) that he related from God (Graham 61). Rather than revelations, a fifth group, represented by ʻAbd Allāh al-Ḥusayn al-Ṭayyibī (d. 1342), describes the divine sayings as reports from God, "the meaning of which [comes] through inspiration (*ilhām*) or dream (*manām*), and which the Prophet reported to his people in his own wording" (Graham 57). Finally, there are partisans of a sixth school which represents a fusion of these views. William A. Graham, for example, speaks of "an essentially unitive understanding of divine and prophetic authority in the early Muslim community" (vii). With regards to the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah*, he opines that "[t]hey are at once divine word *and* prophetic word" (3) [emphasis mine]. Since the Prophet Muḥammad was "transformed by his 'calling' to 'rise and warn'--not only through his 'Book,' but in all his words and acts," he was, very much, "the 'mouthpiece' of God" (Graham 110). Consequently,

> It appears that for the Companions and the early Followers of the Prophet, the divine activity manifested in the mission of Muḥammad was a unitary reality in which the divine word, the prophetic guidance, and even the example and witness of all who participated in the sacred history of the Prophet's time, were all perceived as complimentary, integral aspects of a single phenomenon. (Graham 15)

As Graham explains,

> the dividing lines between Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, scriptural revelation and prophetic inspiration, divine word and prophetic word, were not so absolute in the first century of Islām as would be indicated by later divisions of Islāmic literature and scholarly disciplines and especially by Western scholary works on the various categories of Islāmic sources. (107)

This would explain, for example, why, after the death of the Prophet, there were disputes among his Companions as to which revelations belonged to the Qur'ānic text and which ones represented extra-Qur'ānic injunctions.

So, when reading or studying the *ḥadīth qudsī*, all of these aforementioned possibilities should be kept in mind. Sacred sayings may represent the actual words used by God. However, such status should only be conferred upon traditions which are *ṣaḥīḥ* and *mutawātir*. While many of the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* have sound chains of narration, they are essentially *aḥad*, namely, they have been passed down by a single chain. To claim that a tradition is the literal word of God on the basis of a single *isnād* is to go against obligatory scholarly precaution. The risk is even greater when dealing with traditions which are *ḥasan*, *ḍa'īf*, and *mursal*. Alternatively, it is possible that the Prophet conveyed the meaning in question using his own words, as authorized by God. Even though it is Almighty God who speaks in these sacred sayings, and the meaning is true, *ḥadīth*, whether *qudsī* or not, should never be blindly accepted as absolute truth in each and every instance. This is particularly the case with collections that include weak and spurious sayings. While there is no place for doubt when it comes to the Qur'ān, healthy skepticism should be reserved for all other sources unless authentically established. In the absence of individual expertise, those who are non-specialists should always abide by the following adage: if it agrees with the Qur'ān, accept it; if it contradicts the Qur'ān, reject it. And God knows best.

As for the sacred sayings contained in this compilation, Ḥasan Shīrāzī, the compiler of *Kalimat Allāh* [*The Word of*

*God*], assured his readers that "it has been narrated by a number of our scholars of traditions (*muḥaddithūn*), may God have mercy on them" (587). As he mentions in his preface, he was "careful not to include untrustworthy sources" (25) in his anthology. Although these forty traditions have been passed down since time immemorial without chains of authority, Shīrāzī, a distinguished religious scholar, considered them to be trustworthy. As Shīrāzī has pointed out, "the power of the text is also proof of its authenticity" (587). Although the absence of any chain of narration is unfortunate, the *arba'ūn ḥadīth* are not an exception and belong to a body of traditions and books that have been passed down the centuries without them. The Qur'ān, after all, has no chain of authority. In fact, many of the most important sources on early Islām, including the letters, treaties, and covenants of the Prophet Muḥammad are all devoid of chains of authority. In essence, it is the work itself which is the authority. Despite the fact that it is devoid of an *isnād*, the authorities at the Dār al-Ḥadīth Institute in Qum consider *Kalimāt Allāh* to be an acceptable tradition.

As any expert thoroughly versed in Islāmic scholarship and spirituality can attest, the forty *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* contained in this book appear to be in concordance with the Qur'ān and the authenticated traditions. They contain the scent of the Master of Eloquence, the sweetness of Paradise, shards of light from the Luminous, and droplets from the Fountain of Kawthar. Saturated in spirituality, interspersed with Qur'ānic quotations, Prophetic proclamations, and sagacious sayings, these forty *ḥadīth qudsī* represent a *bona fide* botanical garden of divine beauty in full flower. Calling upon fear and hope, pain and love, these powerful traditions stir up the most positive elements of human nature. A veritable fertilizer for faith, *The Words of God* invoke individuals in their every dimension--spiritual, physical, psychological, and social--placing the highest of hope in human potential. As exponents of Islāmic ethics, these sacred sayings urge human beings to live up to their divine ideal and become the complete human beings they were created to be. Motivated by mercy, justice, and compassion, the sacred sayings circumambulate the universal axis of love. Good comes from

good. With regard to these sacred sayings, such good can only come from God.

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## SOURCES FOR SEEKERS

Since these *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* are only forty drops from the sea of Shī'ite spirituality, seekers may wish to satiate their thirst for more. In such a case, they can be pointed to *al-Jawāhir al-saniyyah fi al-aḥadīth al-qudsiyyah* [*Splendid Jewels from the Sacred Sayings*], compiled by the master of traditionists, Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, which was published by al-Wafā' Institute in Beirut in 1984. For those interested in other collections, they could turn to Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī's *Kitāb mishkāt al-anwār fīmā ruwiya 'an Allāh subḥānahu min al-akhbār*, which contains one hundred and one *aḥadīth*; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūtī's *Jam' al-jāwami*, featuring sixty-six *ḥadith qudsī* in *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaghīr* and one hundred and thirty-three in *Jāmi' al-kabīr*; Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī's *al-Aḥadīth al-qudsiyyah al-arba'iniyyah*; 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Munāwī's *al-Ithāfāt al-saniyyah bi al-aḥadīth al-qudsiyyah*; Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Ṭarabzūnī al-Madanī's *al-Ithāfāt al-saniyyah bi al-aḥadīth al-qudsiyyah* and, finally, the Committee of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth of the Higher Council for Islāmic Affairs in Egypt's *al-Aḥadīth al-qudsiyyah* which is the largest and most complete collection to date.

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## GENESIS OF THE WORK

The current work was compiled by Ayatullāh Ḥasan al-Shīrāzī, the beloved scholar who was martyred during the Lebanese Civil War. It was published by Dār al-Ṣādiq in Beirut under the title *Kalimāt Allāh* [*The Words of God*] in 1969. It was republished by Mu'assasat al-A'lamī lil-Matbū'āt in Beirut in 1984 and by the al-Wafā' Institute in Beirut in 1985. The latest edition was published by Dār al-'Ulūm in Beirut in 2006. The work was translated into Urdu by 'Alī Muḥammad Ijlāl Lakhnavī. It was translated into English for the first time by M. Zakī Baqrī and published by the Council of Islāmic Guidance in Canada in 1988 under the title *A Word of God*. An edited version of the latter was published in several runs by Anṣariyān Publications in Iran in 1997, 1999, and 2003. Regrettably, the original translation was terrible and the partially revised version, in which the work of the editor went unacknowledged and unrecognized, left much to be desired. While the various editions published by Anṣariyān included an improved English translation, the typist made a large number of mistakes typing the Arabic text. Not only did the typist double some words, he skipped entire sentences, forgetting to type them, and mixed up the order of many others. While the Anṣariyān version includes an improved English translation, its Arabic text is catastrophic. Conversely, the edition published by the Council of Islāmic Guidance contains a terrible translation accompanied by a generally correct Arabic text with a few omissions.

As any person proficient in Arabic and English can confirm, the translator does not demonstrate a complete command of either language. Such is clear from both the Canadian and Iranian editions of the work. The English translation contains sentences which do not appear in the original Arabic. Entire sentences in Arabic have been left untranslated. The sequence of sentences is often incorrect. Qur'ānic citations were unrecognized. Either the translator completed his translation on the basis of a faulty Urdu edition or he has only a vague understanding of Arabic. This is not to say that his mistranslation has not been of benefit to many Muslims. Despite all of its problems of syntax, spelling, style, grammar, syntax,

semantics, verbal tense and usage, along with agreement in gender and number, glimpses of the original have been conveyed, albeit through a lens densely fogged. Despite its defects, Baqrī's *Word of God* was welcomed by many non-native speakers of English, speakers of non-standard Indo-Pakistani English, along with Muslims converts who were so thirsty for Islāmic spirituality that they were prepared to engurgitate water of unclear quality. Still, when times are tough, and resources are scarce, even muddy waters can quench religious thirst and save spiritual lives. Evidently, when fresh water is available, and pristine springs are accessible, serving up fetid water cannot be contemplated due to the cramps and subsequent illness that it can cause.

If the *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* are indeed the very Word of God, one would expect translators to treat them with the same care that they do when translating the Qur'ān. To mistranslate an earthly work is an affront to the author. To mistranslate sacred sayings is an affront against God and an act of disregard for the Divine. It is not simply a question of aesthetic and literary eloquence, which may be excusable in certain circumstances; it is an issue of meaning. It is a sad reflection of the current state of Muslim "scholarship" to observe that many, if not most, of the Arabic words from *Kalimāt God* have been incorrectly translated into English. Islām, it must be understood, is based on correct belief and correct action. One cannot exist without the other. If people are to put their faith in works like *A Word of God* and act upon them wholeheartedly, then one is obliged, morally and academically, to ensure their accuracy. Otherwise, one instills erroneous notions in the minds of sincere believers and leads them to engage in erroneous actions.

While claims of perfection should be left to God and God alone, no effort or expense should be spared when translating Islāmic works as poor translations do a great deal of damage to the image of Islām. "What sort of god is this God?" native and educated speakers of English will ask "if he cannot even compose a grammatically correct sentence?" Since God is Beautiful and loves beauty, we must never lose our sense of the sublime. Unlike the careless, sloppy, and slipshod translation of the work which has been in circulation for far too long, *The*

*Word of God* has been subjected to a process of due diligence which includes proper scholarly preparation, peer-review by professionals and, most importantly, a tremendous amount of *taqwā*. Now that *The Word of God* is available in an accurate and idiomatic trilingual translation, which features the original Arabic, many more will be able to benefit from this beautiful book whether they are Arabic, English, French or Spanish-speakers. I ask Almighty God to forgive any of the shortcomings of this work as I ask Him to forgive the shortcomings, however serious, of any previous translators. As Alexander Pope said, "To err is human, to forgive divine."

## FOREWORD

*By Charles Upton*

The *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* here presented as *Forty Sacred Sayings* are of special value because they bridge the gap between outer and inner Islām, between *al-ẓāhir* and *al-bāṭin*, between the "signs on the horizons" and those "in their own souls" (Q. 41:53). My commentary on them will be largely from the inner or Ṣūfī perspective, but this is certainly not the only point of view from which they can be considered. These *aḥadīth* can be read as moral exhortation and practical wisdom; with equal justification they can be read as referring to the inner meanings of the Holy Qur'ān that the Ṣūfīs have concentrated upon, which most often relate to the *aḥwāl* and the *maqamāt*, the spiritual "states" and "stations." These *aḥwāl* and *maqamāt* may be defined as the experiences, insights, purifications, chastisements, virtues and mercies that affect, and become established in, any heart to which the Presence of God is a living reality. There is no real way to absolutely separate the Outer and Inner dimensions of the Islāmic revelation exception in the realm of belief—distorted belief in this case, since both the rulings of the *sharī'ah* or Sacred Law and the sciences of the *ṭarīqah* or Spiritual Path can be traced back directly to the Qur'ān and the prophetic Sunnah; I have done my best to demonstrate this in my book *Day and Night on the Ṣūfī Path* [Angelico Press / Sophia Perennis, 2015]. If either the *ẓāhir* or the *bāṭin* is suppressed, the true Islām of the Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is falsified. There is no moral virtue that does not also symbolize a mystical reality, and no mystical reality that does not naturally express itself as a moral virtue. Consequently those antinomians who believe that spiritual knowledge or *ma'rifah* abrogates moral virtue and the *sharī'ah* are profoundly deluded; certain spiritual realities do indeed transcend the moral dimension, but they never abolish it.

The Ṣūfīs, however, declare that the *bāṭin* has precedence over the *ẓāhir*. Is their perspective simply the irritating arrogance of a self-identified elite, as some believe? Unfortunately, this is

sometimes the case; any truth can become the idol of an individual or group if they claim ownership of it instead of submitting to it and following it. Yet the fact remains that those who understand the inner meanings of the Qur'ān that relate to the *ṭarīqah* (Path) and *ḥaqīqah* (Reality) are often quite capable of understanding with equal expertise the rulings of the Book from which the *sharī'ah* is derived, while those who specialize in the *sharī'ah* often have little or no understanding of the sort of Qur'ānic *tafsīr* that relates to *ṭarīqah* and *ḥaqīqah*. This is not to deny that some self-styled *bāṭinis* have produced spurious *tafsīr* or *ta'wīl* for the obvious purpose of stretching, altering or abrogating the clear legal rulings of the Qur'ān; this, however is something that faithful and orthodox Ṣūfīs have no use for. In this writer's opinion, the question of the proper relationship between *bāṭin* and *ẓāhir*—at least when these are defined as mystical spirituality as opposed to the struggle for social justice—comes down to the question of the essential purpose of religion, which is to save one's soul by following the commands of God and availing oneself of His mercies. Between the one who is capable of bringing a degree of social good into the world but falls into the Fire due to personal corruption, and the one who has no visible effect upon worldly conditions but preserves his soul from corruption and sincerely loves God, and so enters the Garden, who is the winner and who the loser? It is necessary in addition to mention here that the Ṣūfīs take the *bāṭin/ẓāhir* polarity to a higher level than this, since they define as *ẓāhiris* those who aspire to Paradise as a reward for good works, and reserve the term *bāṭinī* for those who are called to fully enter the presence of God in this life.

The Ṣūfīs also maintain that to take *bay'at* with a shaykh of *taṣawwuf*, if his *silsilah* is intact and if he has a degree of personal realization, puts one into a deeper and more direct contact with God than is available to common believers—unless God wills to extend His good pleasure to one or more of these as well. To some this might sound like an arrogant and blameworthy pretension, or an intrusion into Islām of some sort of occult or magical belief, if not an incipient notion of priesthood. How could the mere presence of a Ṣūfī shaykh, either in close proximity or at a distance, affect the heart of a

disciple? But if one had lived in the time of the Prophet and found him or herself in his presence, or in the presence of one of his close companions, how could one's heart not be affected? And who can deny that a relationship with a heroic or highly intelligent or profoundly saintly individual might be the central determining factor in one's life, even if one did not live with him or meet him every day? Muḥammad was like the Qur'ān in human form; therefore, it was inevitable that certain of his closest companions would receive more of his teaching, on more levels, as well as a greater share of his *barakah* or blessing, than most of the *mu'minīn* or believers. And the Ṣūfīs recognize that the one most open to this teaching and most capable of internalizing it was his son-in-law, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, from whose union with the Prophet's daughter Fāṭimah sprang all the Imāms of the Shī'ah and all the Sayyids.

It is also often claimed that Ṣūfīs have various "secret teachings" that must be heterodox; otherwise, why would they keep them secret? Firstly, I would answer that by now there is probably no aspect of Ṣūfīsm capable of being put into words that has not been published by someone, somewhere, at some time in history. Secondly, any science has certain kinds of "technical" instructions that would be both uninteresting and meaningless to those who have not studied that particular science and do not plan to study it in the future, instructions often dealing with specific conditions pertaining to particular situations. Thirdly, I would only point out that most things in life remain virtual secrets because there is no way to put them into words. Only a miniscule part of your own experience in this moment could be expressed by the most accurate and comprehensive exposition—which, if it were ever completed, would have as its subject a moment by then long since buried in the past.

It was the mission of the Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to act both as a spiritual guide and a political leader. As a political leader he brought justice and mercy to the society of his time—but every just and merciful social form he established was only for the purpose of creating conditions in which more souls were likely to be saved. The

*bāṭin* takes precedence over the *ẓāhir* because the *dunyā* is hurrying towards its end; but the *ākhirah* never ends.

God has made some people primarily *ẓāhirīs*, others *bāṭinīs*, and called still others to combine both the *ẓāhir* and the *bāṭin* in varying degrees; the Prophet Muḥammad, as well as 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, were obviously of this third group. Some of the Prophet's companions—'Umar, for example—were more *ẓāhirī* in character, while others—notably the *Ahl al-Ṣuffah*—were clearly of a more *bāṭinī* nature.

The *Ahl al-Ṣuffah* or People of the Bench (*ṣuffah* is the origin of the English word "sofa") were the contemplatives attached to the Prophet's household; they spent their time in prayer, meditation, and remembrance of God. Many who look for the origin of the word "Ṣūfī" claim that it derives either from *ṣafā'*, "purity," or *ṣwf*, "wool," referring to the rough woolen garments of the poor. (Ṣūfīs commonly refer to themselves as the *fuqarā'*, "the poor"). However, I believe that it is just as likely that it derives from the *Ahl al-Ṣuffah*, who certainly give the impression of being a kind of "proto-Ṣūfīs." It is nonetheless interesting that Muḥammad, in his covenant with the Christians of Najrān, says: "It is not permitted to impose a capitation or any kind of tax on monks or bishops nor on any of those who, by devotion, wear woolen clothing or live alone in the mountains or in other regions devoid of human habitation." So woolen clothing, already in the Prophet's time, was associated with hermit ascetics. The Prophet also said: "There is no prophet but has shepherded a flock;" he himself worked as a shepherd at one time. Therefore it is possible that woolen garments also had a certain symbolic association with the prophetic function.

The scholars known as "Orientalists," who developed under European colonialism, have done us all a profound disservice by their irresponsible and ill-informed speculations as to the true nature of Ṣūfīsm. It was based on Christian innovations introduced into Islām, or on Buddhist ideas, or on Shamanic practices—on anything, apparently, but the Sunnah of the Prophet and the verses of the Qur'ān, in relation to both of which the first generations of Orientalists were profoundly prejudiced, unable to see the forest for the trees, and equally unable, apparently, to make out many of the individual trees either. And

while these purely Eurocentric scholars are no longer in the forefront, many of their false assumptions, including the notion of Ṣūfīsm as a foreign intrusion or heterodox innovation, are still being perpetuated in various forms of Salafī ideology—ironically so, since the Salafīs claim they want to throw off all western influence and return Islām to the days of its original purity. But the truth is, there is no single major doctrine of *Taṣawwuf* (Ṣūfīsm) that is not to be found in the Holy Qur'ān, which speaks of "Men whom neither merchandise nor sale beguileth from remembrance of God and constancy in prayer and paying to the poor (*al-fuqarā'*) their due; who fear a day when hearts and eyeballs will be overturned" [Q. 24:37]. If we are to take "constancy in prayer" literally, as meaning prayer that never ceases, this could only refer to the Ṣūfī practice of *dhikrullāh*, "remembrance of God," the constant silent repetition of the name *Allāh* or a formula containing it. If so, then Q. 29:45 would also refer to *dhikrullāh*: "Worship preserveth from lewdness and iniquity, but verily remembrance of God is more important," though the context also allows for the interpretation of "remembrance of God" simply as the recitation of the Qur'ān. (The *ta'wīl* or *bāṭinī tafsīr* of "men whom neither merchandise nor sale beguileth from remembrance of God" might go like this: these "unbeguiled men" are the ones who do not bargain with God for a future Paradise with the coin of good works, but sacrifice all in the hopes of meeting Him even now. This is not the *real* meaning of the passage in question, which also obviously refers to those who never become so involved in their daily distractions that they miss their prayer-times, but it certainly is one of the *inner* meanings. Inner and outer co-exist in the Holy Qur'ān, depend upon each other, and inform each other).

It cannot be denied that all religions borrow elements from other faiths, past or present. Unfortunately, those secular scholars who deny the reality of Divine Revelation will commonly use this elementary fact to present a given religion as a patchwork of heterogeneous influences, sewn together by human cleverness in the service of superstition or political ambition. Certainly Islām drew elements from those religions that preceded it and surrounded it; this was inevitable. The very

Arabic in which the Qur'ān was recited to Muḥammad by Gabriel had been used in the past by the Arab Pagans in their worship and continued to be so used while that recitation was being given. Does this mean that Islām was simply a reform or re-combination of Pagan practices and beliefs? Obviously not. And the same can be said of those elements of belief and practice it shared with Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and (in the case of certain Ṣūfīs) various Central Asian religious currents. Islām, as a new revelation fresh from the hand of God, magnetized to itself from the surrounding civilizations and the human past the specific elements it could put to use. Those which were compatible with the Islāmic revelation were accepted; those which were incompatible were rejected and discarded. Everything that was accepted from pre-Islāmic times and non-Islāmic religions—various elements of Byzantine architecture, for example—was fully Islāmicized. The elements taken from other times and other religions were the guests, but Islām was the host—and it is the host who provides the nourishment. If it could be proved, for example, that Christian ascetics wore woolen garments before the Ṣūfīs did, or that they practiced a constant repetition of a name of God, this would in no way demonstrate the non-Islāmic nature of Ṣūfism; yet some less-than-thoughtful Muslims consider the *dhikrullāh* of the Ṣūfīs to be a heterodox innovation. The Christian Hesychasts use the name of Jesus in their "prayer of the heart;" the Ṣūfis use *Allāh*. Are Muslims, Ṣūfī or otherwise, to be prohibited from pronouncing the name "God" because Christians pronounce the name "Jesus"? Truly, the absurdity of some who attempt to defend Islām from what they perceive to be heresy or innovation—or perhaps it would be better to say, to defend Islām from itself—knows no bounds. May God reward them for their sincerity (to the degree that they possess it), and cure the blindness of their hearts.

I agree with Dr. Morrow that John L. Esposito is wrong to see Ṣūfism as a "reform movement." The Ṣūfīs did not seek to reform Islām; if they came to be something resembling a separate "estate" within the Islāmic *ummah* it was because they held to the degree and depth of spirituality that was taught by the Prophet Muḥammad himself to his closest companions, most

notably ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and they continued to do so as the Muslim community, beginning especially under the Umayyads, fell further and further from the mark set by Muḥammad. It was the practice of the Prophet, for example, to save no money for his personal use and to keep no more food in his house than he and his family needed for that day’s consumption. It was largely because those who later came to be called “Ṣūfīs” maintained this aspect of the prophetic Sunnah, while Islāmic society as a whole continued to fall away from it, that they came to be thought of as “ascetics.” And it is natural that those who were doing their best to preserve the original purity of Muslim spirituality would seek each other out.

Reading *The Ṣūfīs of Andalusia* [edited and translated by Ralph Austin] of Muḥyīddīn Ibn ‘Arabī [A.D. 1165-1240], it is possible to get a glimpse into the social nature of Ṣūfīsm six centuries after the death of the Prophet. One comes to realize that the Ṣūfīs of Ibn ‘Arabī’s place and time were much more integrated into the larger Muslim *ummah* than is common today. Ṣūfīsm is presented in that book not so much as a separate, special “estate,” such as it became in later years, but as a necessary product of the superabundant overflow of basic Muslim piety. Ṣūfīsm is not yet entirely parceled out into the separate and self-enclosed “Ṣūfī orders” which started to develop at the beginning of the 12th century; the Ṣūfīs simply form an extensive network of colleagues, following, or at least venerating, many of the same *murshids*, who share the same general understanding of the Path and are engaged in the same work.

As for ‘Alī al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥurr al-‘Amilī’s statement, quoted by Dr. Morrow in his introduction, that “Ṣūfīsm is Shī‘ism and Shī‘ism is Ṣūfīsm,” this is true in some senses but not in others. The *silsilahs* or chains-of-transmission of most Ṣūfī orders trace back to Muḥammad as the first “Ṣūfī” *murshid* (guide; spiritual master) and ‘Alī as his perfect *murīd* (guided one; disciple)—though the *silsilah* of at least one order, the Naqshbandiyyah, traces back to Muḥammad through Abū Bakr. The understanding that the Ṣūfī *murshid* derives his ability to guide his *murids* on the *ṭarīqah* from his being a link in an unbroken chain of spiritual influence stretching back to the Prophet, as well as from

a mandate descending directly from God, makes him analogous to the Imām of the *Ahl al-Bayt* vis-à-vis the Shī'ah community as a whole. And the notion that the occulted Imām works through delegated representatives is similar in many respects to the Ṣūfī notion of a hidden hierarchy of saints revolving around the pre-eminent saint of the time, known as *al-Quṭb* or the Pole, who is sometimes well-known but sometimes generally unrecognized. And among the recognized Poles of Ṣūfism were at least two of the Shī'ah Imāms: 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. *Taṣawwuf*, however, is not to be identified in every respect with Shī'ism, especially after the occultation of the Twelfth Imām—nor, for that matter, with Sunnism. It is its own reality and estate, possessing its own brotherhoods and authorities. And while some Ṣūfī orders, such as the Ni'matullāhiyyah, are at least nominally Shī'ah, most Ṣūfī orders follow one of the Sunnī *madhāhib* or schools of jurisprudence.

Finally, one passage by John A. Renard quoted by Dr. Morrow needs to be addressed, since it points out the pitfalls that many otherwise competent scholars routinely fall into when writing about Ṣūfīsm, due to their lack of training in metaphysics: "Precisely because some sacred ḥadīths seem to lean too far toward divine immanence, thus compromising God's Transcendence, many Muslims have considered them spurious"—spurious in the sense of "likely fabricated by the Ṣūfīs." Here we can see highlighted some of the misunderstandings that tend to separate the *ẓāhirī* from the *bāṭinī* perspective. The *bāṭinī* might well ask the *ẓāhirī* who complains of an over-emphasis on the Divine Immanence, "Does the Holy Qur'ān itself lean too far toward Immanence in *ayāt* such as "We are nearer to him than his jugular vein" (Q. 50:16) and "wherever you turn, there is the face of God" (Q. 2:115)? Furthermore, there is no way in reality that a true sense of the Immanence of God could ever compromise His Transcendence, since it is by that very Transcendence, by His self-sufficiency and His total independence from any created thing, that He is able to be present everywhere, in no way limited by time, space, number, form, or matter. Certainly a distorted notion of Immanence is in danger of leading the poorly-instructed into the errors of pantheism, incarnationism, and the idolatrous worship

of created things, but the equally erroneous idea that God's Immanence could in any way compromise His Transcendence may also produce a distorted image of Him as a being so inaccessible to earthly humanity that prayer and good works could in no way move Him, nor could His Mercy find any way to reach us. If this image of God were accurate, then the Qur'ān's repeated exhortations to do good, avoid evil and remember the Creator in gratitude would be meaningless. If God were strictly Transcendent with no aspect of Immanence, we would never have heard of Him.

Islāmic metaphysics has protected the notion of the Divine Immanence from the dangers of incarnationism and pantheism by defining it as God's "comparability" (*tashbih*) as opposed to—and also as complementary to—His transcendent "incomparability" (*tanzih*). When the *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* calls God "Lord of the worlds, owner of the Day of Judgment," it is comparing Him to an earthly owner or ruler, whereas the *Surah al-Ikhlāṣ*, when it says "He does not beget nor is He begotten, and there is nothing to which he can be compared," is asserting that in another sense He is absolutely Transcendent, beyond all comparisons. God is not united to or in any way dependent upon His creatures, though He is comparable to them in certain respects. He has no need of them; they are absolutely in need of Him. They are dependent upon Him for both their existence and for their particular qualities—necessarily so, since there is no source other than Him from which Existence or Quality could be derived: no second God.

In line with this definition of the Divine Immanence, all things, including human beings, are defined as *signs* of God, the Arabic word for "signs"—*ayāt*—being the same word used to denote the verses of the Qur'ān. It is as if the universe were a vast Book written by God, of which the Qur'ān is the epitome in the realm of language, and the human *fiṭrah*—the bearer of the *amānah*, the Trust—the epitome in the world of living creatures. This parallelism between the Qur'ān, the universe, and the human form is related to the doctrine of the *Umm al-Kitāb*, the "Mother of the Book"—the Celestial Qur'ān of which the written Qur'ān is a kind of abridged version. The notion of the Mother of the Book becomes nearly a necessary doctrine in light

of the fact that Islām takes the realm of the Unseen—the invisible worlds of the Jinn and the Angels—as a basic article of faith, and of the second fact that God is *al-'Alīm*, the Omniscient, the One who has complete knowledge and awareness of all the worlds and all the creatures, both visible and invisible, of which He is Lord. This Knowledge, which never diminishes and never changes, is the Mother and Origin of the eternal and unchanging Book we know as the Holy Qur'ān. Thus the doctrine of the *Umm al-Kitāb* is strictly orthodox, as long as we remember that God's Knowledge is none other than God Himself, being one of His intrinsic Attributes.

The *Forty Sacred Sayings* presented in this book are so perfectly in line with the Qur'ān that they can almost be thought of as a kind of *tafsīr*—one produced not by analyzing and unfolding the latent meanings of the Book, but by gathering them, compressing them and reducing them to their essence. God, through these *aḥadīth qudsiyyah* given directly to the Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings upon him), is not so much teaching us something entirely new as challenging us, with rare directness, to practice what we preach—to be what we know.

## مراجعة موجزة لكتاب *الأحاديث القدسية*

## للدكتور جان أندرو مورو (إلياس إسلام)

ترجمة د. عمرو سلام

يعتمد الإسلام على مصدرين اثنين: القرآن والسنة. فالمصدر الأول -القرآن الكريم- هو كلام الله تعالى المنزل على نبيه محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم فوق جبل النور في شهر رمضان من العام 610 الميلادي. وقد أُوحي القرآن إلى النبي (ص) كله بمضمونه بواسطة الملك جبريل. ونزل الوحي القرآني متتابعاً وبالتدريج على مدى اثنتين وعشرين سنة. وكتجسيد حقيقي لكلمة الله المنزلة، فإن النبي (ص) كان بمثابة وعاء الوحي الإلهي. فإذا كانت الحقيقة كاملة قد نزلت على محمد (ص) مرة واحدة، فإنه قد أشرك المؤمنين فيها، خطوة خطوة، وعلى مراحل متتالية حددتها المشيئة الإلهية. إن ذلكم القرآن الكريم قد حفظه الله جل جلاله، فهو من عنده تعالى يحظى بعنايته وحفظه. إنه كلمة الله بالمعنى الحرفي للكلمة ومن خلقه تعالى.

أما المصدر الثاني للإسلام، أي السنة المحمدية، فهي تعني أقوال النبي محمد (ص)، المعروفة بالحديث الشريف. وهي تشتمل على أقوال رسول الله (ص) وأفعاله. فعلى الرغم من كون تعاليم النبي (ص) هي تعاليم إلهية في أصلها، فإنها لم تحظ بوعد الحفظ الإلهي. وبما أنها كانت خاضعة لتقلبات التقاليد الشفوية والكتابية معاً، وتم تناقلها بواسطة بشر غير معصومين من الخطإ، فإن الحديث الشريف يبقى كلاماً بشرياً. وهذا لا يعني أن الرواية الشفوية لا يمكن أن تكون أهلاً للثقة والاعتبار. فكما يؤكد ذلك روبرت ج هويلاند: "إن الدراسات الحديثة قد برهنت على مدى قدرة الشعوب، في مرحلة ما قبل الكتابة، على المحافظة بفعالية على تراثها عبر قرون من الزمن؛ وقد أدى هذا إلى الحديث عن مجرد تلوث طفيف بدل الحديث عن تلفيق كبير" (212). فإذا كان من واجب المسلمين أن يؤمنوا بالقرآن ويأخذوا به بكيفية

تامة وشاملة ودون مساءلة، فإن هذا الشرط لا ينطبق على السنة. فقبل قبول الأحاديث النبوية والعمل بمقتضاها، كان من اللازم أن تخضع لعملية تمحيص ودراسة دقيقتين من أجل التأكد من صحتها على الوجه الأكمل. ومهما بلغت درجة صحة الأحاديث النبوية، فإن السنة لا ينبغي أن تأتي إلا في المرتبة الثانية بعد القرآن الكريم كمصدر للتوجيه والتشريع الإلهي. فالقرآن الكريم يحتل المرتبة الأولى، وتأتي السنّة في المقام الثاني.

فإذا كانت السنّة النبوية تشتمل على أقوال وأفعال النبي محمد، (ص) فهي تحتوي أيضاً على عينة مميزة من الأحاديث تُعرَف باسم الأحاديث القدسية. فعلى خلاف الأحاديث المتوارثة المعروفة التي يُروى فيها عن النبي محمد (ص) أنه قال كذا وكذا، فإن الأحاديث القدسية (أو الإلهية أو الربانية) تشتمل على وحي لا يوجد في القرآن الكريم. وبما أن النبي (ص) هو شخص دائم الاتصال بربه، فقد نزلت عليه أصناف مختلفة من الوحي وبطرق وصيغ مختلفة. وكما قال النبي (ص) نفسه: "لقد أُعطيتُ الكتابَ وشيئاً آخر بجانبه" (عن أبي داود، كما أورده غريهام ص.60). وإن الكثير من هذا الوحي الذي كان يمليه الملَك جبريل، أسهم في بلورة القرآن الكريم. فهذه عملية محصنة بمشيئة الله تعالى ووعده. لكن في مناسبات أخرى، كان الخالق جل وعلا يشرك نبيه محمداً (ص) مباشرة عن طريق الكلام الإلهي أو المنام أو الرؤيا بما يكشف للنبي (ص) عن تعاليم روحية. وفي أحيان أخرى، كان الله عز وجل يشرك رسوله محمداً (ص) في أحاديث كان قد أوحى بها في السابق للأنبياء والرسل من قبله مثل موسى وعيسى. وهذه الأحاديث القدسية تشتمل على خصائص تميزها عن القرآن والسنة معاً. يقول النووي "إن أهم فرق بين الصنفين من الوحي هو أن الفئة الأولى كانت 'وحياً مقروءاً' بينما كانت الفئة الثانية 'وحياً رواه محمد (ص) عن ربّه' (انظر غريهام 59).

إن القرآن الكريم هو بالتأكيد كلام الله تعالى المنزّل على النبي محمد (ص) بواسطة الملك جبريل ليكون آخر كتاب منزل للناس كافة. إنه كتاب الإسلام المقدس الذي حفظ الله تعالى مضمونه؛ أما السنة فهي أقوال وأفعال رسول الله (ص)؛ وهي تبتدئ بعبارة: "قال رسول الله (ص)". فإذا كانت تعاليم النبي (ص) تعاليم إلهية، فإن الكلام الذي استعمله للتعبير عن تلك التعاليم كان كلاماً بشرياً. فعلى خلاف القرآن إذن، فإنه لا مجال لاعتبار الأحاديث القدسية بمثابة معجزة لسانية أو أدبية، ولو أنها موحى بها من الله تعالى. وكما يقول القرآن الكريم: إن النبي (ص) "لا ينطق عن الهوى" (3:53). ولذلك،

**#ص2 "فإن الكثير من المسلمين يذهبون إلى أن أحاديث النبي محمد – مثلها مثل القرآن– هي وحي من الله، لكن في هذه الحالة الأخيرة فإن الحديث، الموحى به قد صيغ بألفاظ من النبي لا بألفاظ إلهية. ولهذا السبب تأتي الأحاديث النبوية في الدرجة الثانية من حيث سلطتها التشريعية، حيث إنه لا يجوز الاستناد إلى حديث نبوي لنقض أو نسخ أمر إلهي شرعي. وفي حال التضارب بين القرآن والحديث بخصوص قضية من القضايا، فإن الحسم في ذلك يرجع في [آخر المطاف] إلى النص القرآني بصفة نهائية". (رونار 14).**

وكما يشرح ذلك جوسيف لاوري: "إن مجموع تراث السنة النبوية بالرغم من كونه موحى به من الله فإنه يمثل الإسهام الشخصي المباشر لمحمد في مصادر التشريع المادية للشريعة الإسلامية" (83). إن الأحاديث النبوية على أية حال، والتي تم تناقلها على مدى قرون من الزمن قبل أن تتم عملية جمعها وتصحيحها، هي ليست محفوظة من الله تعالى [كما هو الحال بالنسبة للقرآن الكريم]، بالرغم من ادعاءات المودودي المردودة عليه، والتي يمكن دحضها بدون عناء. فبالنسبة لهذا العالم الباكستاني المرموق، "إن الإله الذي حفظ آخر كتبه، هو قادر على حفظ السنة النبوية كقدوة وهدية مهداة لآخر أنبيائه"

(ذكره براون 248). وإذن يكون البشر (رجالاً وأحياناً نساءً) لا الله تعالى، هم الذين سهروا على حفظ الأحاديث النبوية المنسوبة إلى النبي (ص) عن طريق تناقلها بينهم عبر الزمان. ولذلك الغرض كان لزاماً أن يتم التأكد من أمانة الأشخاص الرواة ومن صدقهم، ثم إخضاعهم لمنهجية علمية صارمة.

أما الأحاديث القدسية فهي أحاديث تحكي ما تعلمه النبي (ص) من ربه. ومن هنا فهي تعتبر كلام الله تعالى منقولاً عنه بواسطة كلام النبي (ص). فالمعنى مستوحى من الله تعالى، وأما التعبير فهو من رسول الله (ص). في بعض الحالات تتعدى سلسلةُ الأسانيد محمداً (ص) لتصل إلى الملك جبريل. فعلى خلاف القرآن الكريم، لا تشكل الأحاديث معجزة لا يمكن الإتيان بمثلها، وذلك مهما بلغت درجة بلاغتها وفصاحتها. وهذا رأي يتفق حوله الجميع. وكما يشرح ذلك السيد الشريف الجرجاني في معجمه *العارفات*:

"**إن الحديث القدسي يستمد معناه من الله تعالى، وتعبيره هو تعبير من رسول الله (ص)، فهو ما أوحى به الله تعالى إلى نبيه سواء أكان ذلك وحياً أو حُلُماً أو رؤيا، وهو ما عبر عنه النبي (ص) وأخبر عنه بكلامه هو؛ ولذلك فإن القرآن الكريم يمتاز [عن الحديث] بأنه -إضافة إلى كونه وحياً من الله تعالى- فإن تعبيره هو تعبير إلهي**" (ذكره إبراهيم وجونسون دايفيس ص8).

على الرغم من كون الأحاديث القدسية لا تتميز بعدم إمكانية الإتيان بمثلها وتقليدها، فهي مع ذلك آية في الروعة، وتحفة أدبية في التراث الأدبي العربي. فهي بما تشتمل عليه من ثروة في الأدوات البلاغية، وبما تتميز به من كونها طافحة بإحالاتها الثرية على القرآن والسنة، فإنها تستعمل لغة إيحائية لكنها غاية في الشفافية والوضوح. فهي -بمعنى من المعاني- تعبر عن مضمون القرآن الكريم وتعاليم الإسلام الروحية والأخلاقية بطريقة مبسطة يفهمها القارئ

العادي شاباً كان أو شيخاً. فبينما نجد قلة فقط من العلماء المتبحرين في اللغة العربية هم من يفهمون فهماً تاماً قراءة القرآن، فإن الأحاديث القدسية هي في متناول الجميع. ولهذا السبب، فهي تشكل أداة تعليمية من الله تعالى. وبما أنها قصيرة نسبياً، ولا تتعدى الصفحة الواحدة إلا نادراً، وتكثر من استعمال الجناس، فهي سهلة التذكر والحفظ.

فيما يتعلق بمحتواها، تركّز الأحاديث القدسية على عقيدة التوحيد والواجبات الدينية، وعلى الأخلاق والفضيلة، والإخلاص والتفاني في الله تعالى، والاستعداد للآخرة (إبراهيم وجونسون دايفيس 17-18). وإنك لتجد الكثير من الباحثين -الذين يؤكدون بأن الأحاديث القدسية هي من عمل متصوفة مهووسين روحياً- يفاجَأون حين يدركون أن تلك الأحاديث تدعو للخير وتنهى عن المنكر وتنذر الظالمين والمستغلين، وتقدم مبادئ اجتماعية وسياسية واقتصادية عميقة. وعلى غرار القرآن الكريم الذي يحض المؤمنين على التفكر والتدبر أكثر من ثمانمائة مرة، فإن الأحاديث القدسية تشتمل على عدد كبير من الأسئلة البلاغية. بعبارة أخرى فهي بمثابة حوار بين الإله وخلقه. وكما هو الشأن في القرآن الكريم، يخاطب الله تعالى عباده مباشرة في الأحاديث القدسية حيث يوجه الخطاب إلى مختلف شرائح المجتمع بما فيهم الأغنياء والفقراء، العمال والتجار، الرجال والنساء، البالغين والأطفال، والأسياد والعبيد. ص3

إن الغاية التربوية من وراء تلك الأسئلة واضحة تتجلى في حث الناس على التدبر والتفكير. وبهذا المعنى، فالأحاديث القدسية تشجع على الاستبطان ومراجعة الذات وتحسينها والسمو بالروح. إنها أعمال تناجي القلب مباشرة.

وعلى الرغم من كون الأحاديث القدسية تلقي بجذورها في القرآن الكريم، فإنه ينبغي دائماً إقامة تمييز واضح بينهما. فبالنسبة للإمام النووي، إن القرآن الكريم لا يمكن الإتيان بمثله، وهو معصوم من التغيير والتحريف. والقرآن الكريم ينفرد ويتميز بتلاوته الطافحة بالبركات. أما الأحاديث القدسية فهي

روايات معزولة عن بعضها البعض، وتشكل جزءاً من كلام الله تعالى. فهي أحاديث منسوبة للنبي (ص) الذي رواها عن ربه، بخلاف القرآن الكريم الذي هو منسوب لله تعالى. فإذا كان الله تعالى هو المتحدث في القرآن الكريم، فإن النبي (ص) هو الذي يروي عن ربه في الأحاديث القدسية. بالإضافة إلى هذا، فإذا كان القرآن هو نتاج الوحي الإلهي بواسطة الملك جبريل فإن الأحاديث القدسية تستمد جذورها من الوحي الإلهي بدون واسطة من الملك جبريل، كما تستمدها من الرؤى والتوطين القلبي (غريهام 59-60). وبالرغم من كونها ذات أصل إلهي، فإن الأحاديث القدسية تتميز عن القرآن الكريم من حيث طريقة إلقائها، كما تتميز عنه بكونها ذات وضع واعتبار مختلف فيما يخص قوتها التشريعية. وكما يفسر ذلك جان رونار:

**"إن هذا الحديث القدسي يظل متميزاً [عن كلام الله تعالى الذي هو القرآن]، ولذلك فهو يأتي في المرتبة الثانية آو المرتبة الثالثة عند بعض المسلمين. إن الكثير من هذه الأحاديث تبدو متفردة عن بقية الحديث النبوي، أو تشكل جزءاً منها في الطبعات المعتمدة... وهناك فئة أخرى من الأحاديث القدسية تعتبر شاذة لكنها حازت شعبية واسعة بالرغم من ذلك. إن للأحاديث القدسية دلالة خاصة في السياق الحالي لما تسلطه من أضواء على الجانب العاطفي للروحانية الإسلامية. فهي تؤكد على وجود الله وإمكانية التواصل معه. كما تؤكد على إمكانية ربط علاقة دائمة من المحبة بين الخالق والمخلوق. وبالضبط لأن بعض الأحاديث القدسية تنحو نحو جانب الوجود الإلهي وحضوره بشكل مفرط، بحيث إنها تخل بفكرة السمو والتسامي الإلهي، فإن الكثير من المسلمين اعتبروها ضعيفة آو موضوعة أو ملفقة. غير أنها تشكل مع ذلك بلورة لبعض أجود وأجمل ما في العبقرية الروحية الإسلامية" (رونار ص16).**

إذا كانت بعض الأحاديث القدسية الفردية تعتبر مزيفة، فإنه لا يجوز الحط من قيمة مجموع المتن المتعلق بها، أو إلقاؤه جانباً، لأن ذلك سيكون من باب رمي الطفل مع ماء الحمام معاً. فلا يمكن للمرء أن يرش بالمبيدات حديقة الخضر كلها بحيث يقتل كل ما فيها لمجرد وجود بعض الأعشاب الضارة بها. يعمد بعض الباحثين إلى انتهاج قراءة بأثر زمني رجعي، أي أنهم يرفضون الروايات القديمة عندما لا تتفق مع وجهات النظر الحديثة. فإذا كان أحدهم مثلاً ينتمي لفئة مناوئي التصوف فإنه يعتبر تبعاً لذلك أن أي حديث تُشتمُ منه رائحة التصوف هو حديث ملفق وزائف. وكما بين ذلك غريهام، "إن الأحاديث القدسية لسيت نتاج 'حركة' من الحركات تُدْعى 'التصوف' (110) . إن الأحاديث القدسية التي يزعم البعض أنها من وضع المتصوفة بعد مرور قرون على وفاة النبي محمد هي موجودة فعلاً في أقدم وأصح مجموعات متن الحديث" (69-70). وبالنسبة لغريهام [أيضاً]، "إن هذا دليل قوي على تجذر الورع الصوفي في الروحانيات الإسلامية المبكرة وفي حدث الوحي والنبوة نفسهما (110). وفي تقدير غريهام:

**ص4 "إن كثرة ورود الأحاديث القدسية في مجموعة الأحاديث المبكرة، ومسألة أنها كانت تعكس في وقت لاحق الاهتمامات المتعلقة بالتصوف، تشكلان دليلاً على الجذور العميقة للتصوف في الأشكال المبكرة للورع والتقوى الذي عرفه الإسلام" (غريهام 69).**

وبما أن جذور التصوف تمتد إلى واقع القرآن الكريم والحديث الشريف، فإن جان ل. إيسبوزيتو يخطئ حين يدعي ب"أن التصوف قد بدأ كحركة إصلاحية جاءت كرد فعل على انتشار الماديات والترف الذي عرفهما المجمتع الإسلامي" (57). فالتصوف هو روح الإسلام، والعرفان هو قلب الإسلام النابض. إن التصوف، وليس الإسلام 'السني' للأمويين والعباسيين، ولا المدارس السنية التي تفرعت عنه، هو الذي يمثل الدين الحقيقي الذي جاء به

النبي محمد (ص). وحينما أتحدث عن التصوف فإنني أقصد به ما يعنيه به العلامة محمد بن علي الحسين الحر العاملي الذي يقول ما يلي: "إن التصوف هو التشيع والتشيع هو التصوف". بعبارة أخرى، إن الإسلام في شكله المتكامل هو الإقرار بأن علياً [كرم الله وجهه] هو خليفة رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) الروحي والسياسي. والتصوف ليست تلك النزعة الروحية الخالية من السياسة التي تنتهجها بعض الطرق الصوفية ولا هو الموقف الشرعي المتصلب لبعض المدارس الشيعية. فالتصوف هو الجمع المتجانس بين الروح والشريعة. في اعتقادي إن الإسلام الصحيح يوجد في ملتقى الطرق بين ما يسمى السنة والتشيع والتصوف.

**الإسلام الحقيقي يوجد في نقطة التقاء السنة والتشيع والتصوف**

وعلى الرغم من أن الأحاديث القدسية تشرح بالتفصيل عدداً كبيراً من المواضيع الأخلاقية والخلقية، وكلها تصلح لأن تكون مبادئ شرعية مؤسّسة، فإن الفقهاء من جميع المذاهب الشرعية قد تحاشوها عموماً في صياغتهم للفقه الإسلامي. فهؤلاء الفقهاء يمكن أن تكون لهم اعتراضات على الأحاديث النبوية حيث اعتبروها [مجرد] مصدر للتوجيه الروحي بدل أن تكون مصدر تشريع. كما أنه من الممكن أن تكون قد ساورتهم بعض الشكوك بخصوص صحتها. وهذا أمر مؤسف، وكما يثبت ذلك غريبهام،

"إن للأحاديث القدسية وشيجة من القدسية والتوقير في التراث الإسلامي، على غرار أي نوع آخر من الروايات التي تم جمعها في كتب الحديث. إن وجودها في كتب الحديث يعد تأكيداً على مقامها الأساس كأجزاء مكونة 'صحيحة' من الحديث، كبقية مَرْوِيَّاتِ الحديث الأخرى التي وجدت طريقها إلى مجموعات الحديث الكبرى [المصنفة]". (غريهام ص83).

وإذا كان هناك علماء مثل المرحوم آية الله حسن ا لشيرازي، الذين يذهبون إلى أن الأحاديث القدسية هي "كلام الله حقاً" (18) فإن هذا الموقف لا يستند على أساس علمي عقلي، بل قد يشكل نوعاً من المجازفة. ذلك أنه يمكن للمرء أن يحاجج بأن القرآن الكريم محفوظ من لدن الله تعالى لأن الله تعالى وعد بحفظه، مصداقا لقوله تعالى: ﴿"إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنا الذِّكْرَ وإِنَّا لَهُ لَحافِظُون"﴾ (15: 9). لكنه مع ذلك لا وجود لأي دليل لا في القرآن ولا في السنة على الاعتقاد بأن الأحاديث القدسية هي محفوظة من لدن الله تعالى.

#ص5

إن القرآن الكريم ليس في حاجة إلى سرد سلسلة الأسانيد الصحيحة من أجل إثبات صحته، ذلك أن ما يحتويه المصحف الشريف هو نفس النص الذي نزل على رسول الله (ص). وهذا لا ينطبق على الحديث النبوي بصفة عامة، وعلى الحديث القدسي بصفة خاصة. فصحة أي حديث قدسي تتوقف على صحة سلسلة الأسانيد التي روي بواسطتها الحديث، كما تتوقف على مضمون الحديث، فإذا ما كان هناك عيب في سلسلة الأسانيد، فإن محتوى الحديث يعتبر معيباً أيضاً وبالضرورة. وبالمقابل، إذا كانت سلسلة الأسانيد صحيحة، لكن مضمون الحديث يتناقض مع القرآن الكريم أو مع أحاديث صحيحة، فإنه من الواجب رفضه. وحتى تلك الأحاديث القدسية المزعوم أنها صحيحة، مثل تلك الموجودة في كتاب *مائة حديث وحديث* والذي ترجمه إلى اللغة الإنجليزية سيد مسعود الحسن، فهي أحاديث مملوءة حتى التخمة بمضمون مغلوط من

الناحية اللاهوتية. فأسانيدها صحيحة أو حسنة بالمقاييس السنية، لكن التعاليم التي تتضمنها الكثير من الأحاديث الموجودة في الكتاب تتعارض تعارضاً تاماً مع القرآن الكريم ومع السنة الصحيحة ومع مثالية آل بيت النبي (ص).

إن الادعاء بأن الأحاديث القدسية هي كلام الله هو معناه أن ترفع طائفة من تلك الأحاديث إلى مقام القرآن الكريم. وهذه مسألة فيها إشكال على أقل تقدير، ذلك لأن الفرق شاسع بين الإثنين. فعلى خلاف القرآن -يقول الملا علي القارئ الهراوي- الذي أنزله الله تعالى على محمد (ص) بواسطة الملك جبريل، فإن الأحاديث القدسية هي نتاج وحي وإلهام ومنام (نقلاً عن إبراهيم وجونسون دايفيس ص8؛ وغراهام ص61). وعلى خلاف القرآن الكريم، الذي تم تناقله بالتواتر، أي باستعمال وسائط متعددة من جيل لجيل، فإن الأحاديث القدسية تم تناقلها عن طريق الأفراد (إبراهيم وجونسون دايفيس ص8، ص10؛ وغريهام ص61). وعلى خلاف القرآن الكريم الذي تُقرأ آيات منه في الصلاة، فإن قراءة الأحاديث القدسية أثناء الصلاة لا تجوز (نقلا عن إبراهيم وجونسون دايفيس ص8). وعلى خلاف القرآن، فإنه يمكن للمرء أن ينكر ما جاء في الحديث القدسي دون أن يتهم من أجل ذلك بالكفر(8).

وكما يلاحظ إبراهيم وجونسون دايفيس، هناك فروق طفيفة بين القرآن والحديث القدسي. مثلاً، نجد القرآن مقسماً إلى سور وآيات ولا نجد ذلك في الأحاديث القدسية؛ وأما الأجر المضاعف عشر مرات لقارئ القرآن فهو لا ينطبق على الحديث القدسي. كما أن عدم جواز التصرف في صياغة القرآن لا تنطبق أيضاً على الحديث القدسي. ومن هنا فإن ادعاء الشيرازي بأن الأحاديث القدسية هي صِنْوُ القرآن، إذ هي في [نظره] "تساعد على إتمام مهمة القرآن" (18) هي دعوى باطلة بكل وضوح. ذلك لأن القرآن كامل ومكتمل في حد ذاته ولا يحتاج لأي شيء آخر ليكون كذلك؛ فالقرآن يمكن أن يوجد لوحده بدون وجود الأحاديث ولكن الأحاديث لا يمكن أن توجد بدون

وجود القرآن. لأن أي شيء وكل شيء في السنة تجد أصله في القرآن. إن النبي (ص) كان بحق هو المجسد تجسيداً حقيقياً للقرآن الكريم؛ إنه القرآن يمشي على رجليه بصفته المجسد للوحي الإلهي. فلم يكن محمد (ص) موجوداً في القرآن فحسب، بل يشكل القرآن جزءاً لا يتجزأ منه. ولذلك فإن كل شيء قاله النبي (ص) أو فعله كان في وفاق تام مع القرآن. كما أن نعت الحديث القدسي بأنه 'صنو القرآن' هو كلام غير جائز لأنه يفترض في الصنوين أن يكون لهما نفس الأصل وأن يتكافآ في كونهما قد صدرا عن مصدر واحد. غير أن القرآن ليس له مثيل ولا كفء. وإذن فبالإضافة إلى كون تشبيه الشيرازي هو تشبيه مُحْرِج، فهو هدف سهل للانتقاد. فلو افترضنا جدلاً أن القرآن والحديث القدسي هما صنوان، فإنه لا يمكن أبداً أن يكونا توأمين تامَّيْن؛ فالفرق بينهما إذن لا يرجع فقط لتعذر مقارنة حمولتهما الأدبية، بل هو فرق في المقام والسلطة الاعتبارية لكل واحد منهما. فالقرآن الكريم بصفته كلام الله تعالى هو خطاب منزه، لا يأتيه الباطل من بين يديه ولا من خلفه (وهو شرعي وذو مشروعية)، كما أنه محفوظ ومصون. فلا أحد من العلماء مهما بلغ شأنه ادعى يوماً أن الأحاديث النبوية قد حافظت على نقائها وصفائها من وقت النبي (ص) إلى تاريخ تدوينها واعتمادها. فأي فقيه في أدنى السلم، وأي ملا من أبسط الملالي يدرك جيداً بأن الأحاديث النبوية قد تعرضت للتحريف بمآت الآلاف. فالكثير من الأحاديث القدسية الموجودة في المصادر السنية لها ارتباط بمرجعية أشخاص ليسوا ذوي ثقة؛ والكثير من هؤلاء الأشخاص كانوا مُفْتَرين كذَّابين مشهورين. فإذا كانت بعض الأحاديث قد تعرضت للتحريف منذ البدء، أي بواسطة الرواة الأوائل الموجدين على رأس قائمة سلسلة الرواة (الأسانيد)، فقد تم دس الكثير من الأحاديث في متن المجموعات المعروفة من الحديث على يد يهود ونصارى نسبوا أحاديث توراتية وأخرى محرَّفة للنبي محمد (ص). كما تم وضع أحاديث أخرى من قبل بعض

المتصوفة ممّن كانوا ميالين لهذا الجنس من السنة النبوية [أي للحديث القدسي]، إذ قام بعض هؤلاء باختلاق أحاديث من أجل تسويغ ممارساتهم التعبدية. وهناك من المتصوفة #ص6 من ادعى أنه تلقى أحاديث من النبي (ص) مباشرة، أو من الله تعالى، أو عن طريق الأجْرام السماوية بواسطة "الكشف". وإذا ثبتت صحة هذا النمط من الوحي العمودي، فإنه لا يمكن التأكد منها من وجهة نظر علمية.

وهذا لا يعني أن الأحاديث القدسية غير صحيحة، أو أنها من كلام البشر. فلا غَرْوَ أن الأحاديث القدسية هي من عند الله تعالى. وبهذا المعنى، فهي بالتأكيد كلام الله. فالقضية إذن ليست في كون الأحاديث القدسية كلام الله من الناحية النظرية، ولكن في مدى اعتبارها كلام الله من الناحية العملية. وبما أن الأحاديث القدسية تختلف من حيث درجة صحتها، فكيف لنا إذن أن نتعامل معها كصنف متجانس؟ إنه لا يمكن للمرء أن يدعي بأن كل المتن الحديثي برمته من الأحاديث القدسية هو كلام الله. فإذا نظرنا إلى القرآن الكريم مثلاً، فإنه لا يمكن قبول سورة 'البقرة' وإنكار سورة 'الإخلاص'. لكن في حالة الأحاديث القدسية فإنه بإمكان المرء أن يرفض حديثاً من الأحاديث -أو حتى مجموعة أو كتاباً من كتب الحديث- وقبول آخر على أنه صحيح. لكن بالنسبة للقرآن، إنها مسألة إما 'أن تأخذه كله أو تتركه كله'؛ أي أنك إما أن تقبله على أنه صحيح كله -كمؤمن يعتقد في ذلك حقيقة- أو أن ترفضه فتصنف بالتالي على أنك غير مؤمن. لكن لا يمكن تطبيق نفس المقارنة على الأحاديث القدسية. وهذا معناه ببساطة أن كل حديث ينبغي أن يقيَّم على أساس قيمته الخاصة، بما في ذلك سلسلة الأسانيد المتعلقة به وانطلاقاً من محتواه. وعلى هذا الأساس فإن بعض الأحاديث القدسية هي أحاديث صحيحة وأخرى أحاديث حسنة وأخرى ضعيفة أو مرسلة أو موضوعة، من بين تصنيفات أخرى كثيرة.

إن الأحاديث الأربعين في المجموعة المنتقاة بين أيدينا هي مجموعة اعتبرها آية الله حسن الشيرازي أحاديث صحيحة. وبما أن السيد الشيرازي كان 'شعبوياً' بمعنى أن كتابه *كلمات الله* كان الهدف منه هو نشر الأفكار والأخلاق الإسلامية في صفوف شباب المسلمين الشيعة، فعدم إدراجه للمصادر بالنسبة لهذه الأحاديث الأربعين يعطي الانطباع بأن العمل هو عمل صحيح لا غبار عليه. وهذا موقف معروف عند بعض السنة والسلفيين المناوئين للعلم من القائلين بالإطلاقية والجوهرية. ففي التقاليد العلمية الشيعية لا يوجد هناك مصدر للحديث عليه طابع يقول إنه صحيح مائة بالمائة. فالبحث والتقصي العلمي هو بمثابة سفر لا نهاية له ومسيرة مستمرة دائبة. فمصادر البحث يجب أن تخضع دائماً للتمحيص؛ وعلى هذا فإن عدم إدراج الشيرازي للأسانيد بالنسبة لرواية لتلك الأحاديث القدسية الأربعين، يُعد عيباً أكاديمياً خطيراً، مع العلم أنه يمكن أن يكون ذلك مفهوماً باعتبار ميول عائلته الأخبارية. فالسيد الشيرازي قد أورد فعلاً الأسانيد . بعضها تام وبعضها ناقص- بالنسبة لبقية الأحاديث في مؤلفه الضخم *كلمات الله*. إن أي حديث لا يمكن أن يكتسب أي قيمة إلا بمقدار ما يتوفر عليه من أسانيد تثبت صحة روايته، على الرغم من أن ذلك الحرص على صحة الرواية لا قيمة كبيرة له عند القارئ غيرالمتخصص. إن الوعي بهذا الأمر هو الذي يجعل كل ذي قلب حي ينأى بنفسه من أن يفتري كلاماً وينسبه للنبي محمد (ص)، أو للأئمة المعصومين أو لله تعالى جل شأنه. فبينما تعتبر العقيدة أساس علمنا، فإن العقل هو الذي ينشئ الجذور الموطّنة لأي دين. فإذا كان الإيمان الأعمى شيئاً خطيراً -مثله مثل العقل الخالص، فإنه يتعين إقامة توازن بين الإيمان والعقل لضمان التوازن الروحي والفكري. إن الشيخ المفيد مثلاً "يعتقد بأن البحث العقلاني هو أداة لا بد منها لتحديد صحة أي معتقد، وهو قد ابتعد عن اعتماد شيخه ابن بابويه على أحاديث الآحاد المروية عن الأئمة، والتي

اعتمدت حججاً في عدد من القضايا" (براون 131). وإذن، فلا غرو في أن يُحدِث كتاب الشيرازي *كلمات الله* بعض السجال في الأوساط العلمية الشيعية بسبب اشتماله على عدد كبير من أحاديث الآحاد والأحاديث المرسلة. وكما يشرح ذلك غريبهام، "إن أحاديث الآحاد في الفقه الإسلامي يقصد بها تلك الأحاديث التي روتها بعض المرجعيات، ولكن بعدد لا يصل إلى درجة تمنع من أن يعتبر الحديث غير صحيح أو معيباً" (ص75، م15). أما الأحاديث المرسلة فهي أحاديث تكون أسانيد روايتها ناقصة، أي أنها قد تصل فقط إلى تابع من التابعين ولا تمتد إلى صحابي من صحابة النبي (ص) (ص73، م13)؛ أو في السياق الشيعي قد تقفز الأسانيد مباشرة إلى إمام من الأئمة أو إلى النبي (ص) مع عدم ذكر كل الأسانيد في تسلسلها.

إن هذه المقاربة النقدية التي تمزج بين العقيدة والعلم هي المقاربة الأسلم دون شك، إذا قارنَّاها بالمقاربة العدمية للباحثين الغربيين الذين هم كذابون محترفون في خدمة الشيطان –هذا إذا تحرينا أقصى درجات اللطف في وصفهم. ذلك لأن هؤلاء الكفرة الملاحدة المتمرّسين ص7 يعتقدون بأن ليس هناك شيء اسمه الحقيقة، سواء أكانت مطلقة أم نسبية. وبما أنهم لا يستطيعون ولا يريدون أن يؤمنوا، فإنهم يودون لو استطاعوا أن يجرُّوا أكبر عدد ممكن من الناس إلى حصون كفرهم. ففي نظرهم "إن الأحاديث القدسية موضوعة، والتراث الحديثي افتراء، والقرآن موضوع، والنبي كاذب..." هكذا يستطردون سلسلة أكاذيبهم. صماء بكماء عمياء، إن ذرية الشيطان هذه لا تستطيع رؤية الحقيقة والجمال كما هي. إنها تركز على قضية الأصول مع علمها الأكيد أن مثل هذه الأشياء لا يمكن إثباتها ولا دحضها. إنها تدعي أن القرآن الكريم والحديث قد تم نقلهما عن التوراة، وعن المصادر المحرفة، وعن التراث الشفوي، متجاهلة أن تشابه الأشياء لا يمكن أن يعتبر دليلاً كافياً بالقول بالانتحال، بل هو تأكيد على وجود أصل مشترك هو الله تعالى. إنها تتجاهل

القيمة الأدبية للأحاديث القدسية التي هي في حد ذاتها جديرة بأن تصنف ضمن أمهات وعيون الآداب العالمية؛ كما أنها تتناسى مدى الخير العميم الذي يأتي من ذلك التراث. وكما يفسر ذلك جوناثان براون، "إن النقد الغربي للتراث الحديثي يمكن اعتباره فعلاً من أفعال الهيمنة، حيث تفرضُ وجهةُ نظر للعالم نفسَها على أخرى بالقوة عن طريق إملاء الشروط التي يتم عبرها بسط "المعرفة" و"الحقيقة" (198). والحق "إن مسألة الصحة والأصل هي جزء من نقاش واسع حول دينامية السلطة التي تربط بين "الدين" و"الحداثة" (198). وكما يعترف بذلك براون "إن التراث الحديثي هو من الشساعة بمكان، ومحاولاتنا لتحديد صحته تبقى بالضرورة محدودة، إذ تنحصر في بعض النماذج إلى درجة أن أية مواقف تهم صحة [ذلك التراث] تبقى بالضرورة مبنية على مجرد نظرتنا النقدية للعالم أكثر مما هي مبنية على الواقع التجريبي" (198). وكما يشرح ذلك سيد حسين نصر:

**"إن الإسلام الموروث لا يرفض الحديث لأنه لا ينسجم مع رؤية العالم الحديث المبنية على السببية التاريخية والتاريخانية الفلسفية وعلى المعنى المخفف للوحي الذي وجد طريقه حتى للفكر الديني الغربي الحديث. فهو يعتمد على المناهج النقدية لعلم الحديث كما تمت بلورتها وتعهدها على يد علماء ومشايخ مسلمين متخصصين في علم الحديث، [تلك المناهج] التي تنبني -كما هو واقع الحال- على التواتر التاريخي للتراث كما على البركة التي تحفظ الحقيقة داخل تراث ما، ما دام ذلك التراث حياً. إن الفقه الإسلامي التقليدي هو أيضاً منفتح على نظر كل الأعمال التمحيصية النقدية للمتن الحديثي، طالما أن ذلك النقد لا يستند على فرضية أن كل ما لم يترك أثراً مكتوباً ومدوناً في سجلات هو شيء غير موجود. إن زاوية النظر الفقهية التقليدية تستحضر دائماً المبدأ الشهير في الفلسفة الإسلامية الذي يقول: 'إن عدم الوعي بشيء ما، ليس دليلاً على عدم وجوده". (5)**

ومهما بلغت درجة الأذى الذي حاول البعض نشره بواسطة نظرياتهم الهدامة المتعلقة بـ"أصول" الإسلام، فإن "جوهر الحديث الشريف في مرحلته المبكرة قد اعترف به الباحث ألويس سبرينغر، وحتى غولدزيهر اعترف من جهته بوجود 'قاعدة أساس' لرواية الحديث التي كان مصدرها النبي [محمد] ومعاصروه" (غريهام 4). وكما يشرح ذلك غريهام، "إن جوهان فوك، ثم بعده جيمس روبسون، أكد كلاهما على العناصر الأصيلة والطابع الموثوقي للحديث، لا كمستودع لاحق للتزوير فحسب، بل أيضاً كوعاء للتراث الإسلامي المبكر" (4). بعبارة أخرى، لقد وصل الكثير من الباحثين الغربيين الذين ألحوا على أن الحديث لم يكن نتاجاً تاريخياً، إلى حلقة مفرغة. في آخر المطاف، لقد توصلوا إلى نفس النتيجة التي توصل إليها علماء الحديث المسلمون قروناً قبلهم؛ أي "أن هناك ذهباً في تلك التلال"، بعبارة أخرى هناك أحجار نفيسة في الحقيقة وسط ركام من ملايين الأحجار عديمة القيمة. ويبدو أن غريهام قد فوجئ تقريباً بكون الحديث المعتمد –سواء في شكله الصحيح أو في صيغته المزيفة– يرجع تاريخه إلى منتصف القرن الثامن [الميلادي]، لا إلى القرن التاسع أو إلى ما بعده، كما افترض ذلك الباحثون الغربيون (1).

في الوقت الذي رفض فيه الباحثون المعاصرون هذه الأحاديث القدسية بدعوى أنها أحاديث جاءت في فترة لاحقة وهي من وضع المتصوفة، فإن غريهام يُقِرّ بـ"أنه سرعان ما اكتشف بأن عدداً لا يستهان به من هذه الأحاديث كانت موجودة في مجموعة الحديث المبكرة" (vii). فبعيداً عن أن تكون أحاديث ملفقة بعد قرون على وفاة النبي (ص)، "فإن الأحاديث القدسية تبدو أنها عنصر مبكر إن لم تكن عنصراً 'بدئياً' [تأسيسياً] في التراث الإسلامي" (غريهام 109). ص 8

وبما أن الأحاديث القدسية تحتوي على أقوال النبي محمد (ص)، إلى جانب آيات قرآنية، فإنها تظهر للعين الأكاديمية المتجردة من الأهواء بمثابة خليط

من المقتطفات تم جمعها بعد حين في مرحلة لاحقة عن الأحداث. إنها توصف عند المحدّثين (أو فقهاء الحديث) بالأحاديث المركبة تم جمعها ضمن محور متقارب وعلى أساس أنها تشكل وحدة منسجمة. من الممكن أن يكون لكل الأحاديث وجود مستقل عن بعضها البعض وتم تحقيقها بطريقة احترافية. فصحَّتها إذن ليست موضع شك، ما هو جديد على أية حال، هو كونها قد تم تجميعها لغرض روحي أو تعليمي ما. غير أن هذه ظاهرة قد تكون تم تأويلها بطريقة مختلفة. فمن الجائز أن الأحاديث المكونة من جملة واحدة والموجودة في مجموعة كتب الحديث كانت في الأصل جزءاً من نصوص أطول وأكثر تفصيلاً وتوسعاً. ومن إلقاء النبي (ص). فالأشخاص [الرواة] كأفراد على اختلافهم تذكروا فقط أجزاء من كلام وخطب الرسول (ص) في مسجده، فمن خطبة كاملة يمكن للمرء [الراوي] أن يتذكر، بعد مرور عشرات السنين على الحدث، حديثا واحداً. وربما لم يكن العلماء يحاولون إعادة تركيب الخطب النبوية كاملة في شموليتها؛ وربما كانت تلك الخُطَب متداولة: أي أنها كانت موجودة في شكل مجزَّء كما قد تكون موجودة في شكل مجموع. فبالنسبة للشيعة، يمكن أن نعتبر تفسيراً آخر في نهاية المطاف، ويتمثل في حفظ تعاليم الإسلام الصحيحة على يد أئمة أهل البيت النبوي الشريف.

فبمجيء الإمام الخامس والإمام السادس من الأئمة الشيعة، كانت السنة المحمدية الصحيحة تتعرض للضياع والنسيان، إذ نتيجة للأعمال الهدامة للأمويين والعباسيين، الذين دأبوا خلال قرون من الزمان على التسويق الجماهيري للأكاذيب، مؤسسين بذلك لصناعة الكذب والبهتان والتلفيق، كان نتيجتُه وضع الآلاف من الأحاديث المزورة، وتم بالتالي القضاء عملياً على التعاليم النبوية الحقيقية. فلولا الأئمة من سلالة النبي (ص) لَتَعَرَّض الإسلام الحقيقي [لا قدر الله] للزوال من على وجه الكرة الأرضية. وعلى الرغم من مكائد أعداء الإسلام، -ومن أسوإ هؤلاء من يدَّعون أنهم ينتسبون للإسلام-

فإن الأئمة كان كل واحد منهم يمتلك تعاليم الله وخاتم رسله، في صيغتها الصافية والكاملة. ففي كثير من الأحيان، إن لم نقل في جلها، كان الأئمة يستندون إلى سلسلة أسانيد تتفوق من حيث جودتها على أصح الروايات المعروفة، وهي المتمثلة في العلم الإلهي اللدني، والوسائط الملائكية، والاستنزال اللحظي من اللوح المحفوظ. إن تعاليم وأحاديث كانت قد ضاعت في العالم الأرضي قد تم إحياؤها بواسطة اتصال الأئمة بعالم الملكوت. إن أدعياء العلم وأشباه المثقفين المتلفّعين برداء من صلفية المنطقية الخالصة لا يمكنهم أبداً أن يتصوروا إمكانية حدوث مثل هذه الأمور، أو مجرد حملها على محمل الجد على أقل تقدير. إن المستشرقين الذين يسعون إلى تقويض بنيان الحديث الشريف يفعلون ذلك وهم الطرف الخاسر في آخر المطاف، ذلك لأن الحقيقة تبقى دائماً هي الحقيقة مهما اختلف شكلها الظاهر أو مصدرها. ولقد فهم ويليام أ. غريهام هذا الأمر جيداً حين صرح بـ"أن الأمر الحاسم في مدى 'صحة' كتاب مقدس أو أي شيء آخر ذي معنى ديني، يتجلى في آخر المطاف، في صحة أصالته والإيمان به عند أشخاص معينين أو عند مجموعة معينة من الأشخاص في عصر معين" (2). وكما صرح بذلك العلامة طباطبائي، "بالنسبة إلينا لا يهمنا من ألّف كتاب *نهج البلاغة* [للإمام علي كرم الله وجهه]، فالكاتب يبقى هو علي (ك) ولو عاش في القرن الماضي" (9).

في الحقيقة كل الأحاديث المستندة إلى أسانيد صحيحة تعود في آخر المطاف إلى النبي (ص) عن طريق صحابته. لكن بالنسبة للمستشرقين، فإن الأحاديث القدسية قد تم اختلاقها فيما بعد، أي بعد مرور قرون من الزمان. إنني أود أن أحسب أن معظم الأكاذيب والأمور المختلقة قد وقعت بعد وفاة النبي (ص). وتلك الأكاذيب كانت من وضع المنشقين السياسيين مثل بني أمية، الذين رغم ادعائهم الانتماء للإسلام، فهم قد سعوا دائماً إلى هدمه. فبعد وفاة رسول الله

(ص) شرعوا في تطبيق مخططهم واستولوا على الحكم وسعوا إلى نشر الأكاذيب طولاً وعرضاً في محاولة منهم إفساد دين الله الذي ظلوا على الدوام مناوئين له. فمثلهم في ذلك كمثل النمل الأبيض، يعملون على تقويض أسس الإسلام من الداخل وعلى تآكل مكونات الإيمان، والقضاء على العقائد، وتمزيق معاني الشعائر الدينية، ونخر الأخلاق الفاضلة. إن الأحاديث التي نقلها هؤلاء الخونة قد زعموا أنها أحاديث صحيحة ومصدّقة من قبل أهل السنة والجماعة، كما زعموا بأنها رُويت وفق منهجية صارمة من جيل لجيل إلى أن تم تدوينها حسب معايير مضبوطة في كتب الحديث الصحاح. إن المناهج المتبعة في الحفاظ على الحديث الشريف وروايته كانت مناهج سليمة وفي منتهى الصرامة، كما كانت طرق تقييم الأحاديث طرقاً سليمة صارمة وعلمية. وكانت أمانة ونزاهة معظم علماء الحديث لا يرقى إليها أدنى شك. ص9 . فقلد كانوا يؤمنون بكل وصدق وإخلاص أنهم كانوا يعملون على رواية وحفظ. وتقييم الأحاديث النبوية الشريفة [المروية] عن رسول الله (ص). لكن يبدو أنهم عملوا فقط على جمع أكاذيب على مر القرون. غير أن هذا لا يعني [بالطبع] أن بعض الحقيقة لم يتم نقلها أيضاً في عملية الرواية، ذلك لأن هنالك درجة من التداخل والتقاطع بين الأحاديث السنية والأحاديث الشيعية. إن القضية تكمن بالأساس فيمن يمكننا تصديقه من الرواة المنتمين لجيل المسلمين الأوائل. فمع استثناءات قليلة يروي فقهاء الحديث السنة أحاديث عن الصحابة الذين عارضوا الإمام علياً (ك) ووقفوا بجانب الأمويين. وهؤلاء حتى عندما يذكرون الإمام علياً أو أتباعه الأوفياء له، فإنهم يفعلون ذلك انطلاقاً من مرجعية أعدائهم. أما الشيعة فإنهم يتحرّون دائماً التأكد من رواية الحديث منقولاً عن آل بيت النبي (ص) ؛ أي عن أئمة أهل البيت الإثني عشر، وأتباعهم الأوفياء المحبين لهم.

وفيما يتعلق بالعلماء المسلمين الأتقياء، فإن الأحاديث القدسية ما دامت صحيحة من حيث أسانيدها ومعناها، فهي تعتبر كلام الله تعالى: أي بمعنى أنها كانت إلهاماً من الله تعالى. وعلى الرغم من اتفاق العلماء على أن الأحاديث القدسية كانت قد أُنزلت على رسول الله (ص) وأن معناها كان بإلهام من الله تعالى، إلا أنهم يختلفون حول مسألة فيما إذا كان كلامها وألفاظها مملاة من الله تعالى، أو أن النبي (ص) صاغ المعنى بألفاظه هو. وكما رأينا، فإن بعض العلماء الشيعة من أمثال آية الله حسن الشيرازي، وحتى العلامة محمد بن علي الحسين الحر العاملي، يعتقدون بأن الأحاديث القدسية هي أحاديث إلهية لا من حيث ألفاظها ولا من حيث محتواها. وكما يعبر عن ذلك سيد أختر رضوي في كتابه *القرآن والحديث* "إن الألفاظ والمعاني معاً هي من عند الله تعالى" (ذكره بقري (iii) ). وبالرغم من كون وجهة النظر هذه يأخذ بها بعض العلماء السنة الذين "يذهبون إلى أن المعنى والألفاظ معاً في الأحاديث القدسية قد أعطاهما الله تعالى لمحمد" (غريهام 62)، فإن علماء "آخرين يحاجُون بأنه إذا كان المعنى من الله تعالى فإن التعبير هو من عند النبي (ص). وكما يشرح ذلك م. م. عزمي: "إن معنى هذه الأحاديث قد أُوحِي بها إلى النبي (ص) الذي عبر عنه بتعبيره الخاص" (44). فإذا كان المعنى من الله تعالى، فإن التعبير والألفاظ في الأحاديث القدسية كانت نتاج اجتهاد النبي الشخصي" (غريهام 62). وبالنسبة لعزمي، "إن القرآن الكريم هو كلام الله تعالى حقيقة وكل ما فعله النبي (ص) هو أنه تلقاه وعلمه للناس وشرحه لهم وأوصاهم بالعمل به" (44).

بينما تتفق كل من الفئتين من علماء السنة وعلماء الشيعة على أن معنى الحديث القدسي هو معنى إلهي، فإنهما تختلفان حول التعبير (إبراهيم وجونسون دايفيس 11). فبالنسبة للفئة الأولى إن التعبير هو تعبير إلهي، بينما تقول الفئة الثانية إن التعبير هو عبارة عن إلهام إلهي (11). هناك

علماء -مثل آية الله علي مشكيني- الذين ينتمون لمدرسة ثالثة تقوم على المزج بين مظاهر المذهبين المذكورين، حيث إن مشكيني يقول "إن الحديث القدسي ...هو أيضاً كلام الله تعالى لكن ألفاظه هو من الصنف الذي أوحي به إلى الأنبياء السابقين". بعبارة أخرى، إن الأحاديث القدسية هي كلام الله تعالى في مضمونها وألفاظها معاً، لكن التعبير في الأحاديث القدسية ينتمي إلى صنف خاص من الكلام الإلهي. أما صبحي الصالح الذي يتزعم الفئة الرابعة، فهو يؤكد على أن الأحاديث القدسية لم تتنزَّل كوحي ولم تكن حديثاً عادياً؛ فقد كانت مواعظ استوحاها النبي (ص) من الله تعالى (غريهام 61). أما الفئة الخامسة ويمثلها عبد الله الحسين الطيبي (المتوفى سنة 1342م) فبدل القول إن الأحاديث القدسية هي كلام منزل فهو يصفها بكونها رواية عن الله تعالى؛ "ومعناها يأتي عن طريق الإلهام، أو المنام، ويعبر عنه النبي (ص) بتعبيره الخاص" (غريهام 57). وأخيراً يقول أصحاب المدرسة السادسة -التي هي عبارة عن جماع للآراء السابقة، حيث إن ويليام أ. غريهام مثلاً يتحدث عن فهم توحيدي للمرجعية الإلهية في المراحل الأولى للجماعة أو الأمة الإسلامية (vii). وبالنسبة للأحاديث القدسية، فهو يرى بأنها "قدسية إلهية لفظاً و معنى معاً" (3) (التسطير من المؤلف). فبما أن النبي محمداً (ص) قد عرف تحولاً بعد أن أمره الله تعالى بقوله: ﴿قم فأنذر﴾ (74: 2) لا بواسطة كتابه المنزل فحسب، الذي هو القرآن، ولكن أيضاً بواسطة كل أقواله وأفعاله (ص). وإذن بهذا المعنى فقد كان النبي (ص) بكل معنى الكلمة 'هو الناطق باسم الله تعالى' (غريهام 110)، ولذلك فإنه # 10 بالنسبة للصحابة والتابعين الأولين، كان النشاط الإلهي المتجلي في الرسالة المحمدية واقعاً وحدوياً، ذلك أن الوحي المنزل والتوجيه النبوي، وحتى الحضور والسلوك المثاليين لجميع من عاش تلك الفترة المقدسة، كل هذا أسهم كعناصر متلاحمة متكاملة في بلورة ظاهرة فريدة من نوعها. (غريهام ص 15).

**"إن الخطوط الفاصلة بين القرآن والحديث، وبين الوحي الإلهي والإلهام النبوي، وكلام الله وكلام النبي، لم تكن يوماً خطوطاً واضحة مميزة بالمعنى المطلق بما يكفي في القرن الإسلامي الأول، مقارنة بالتشعبات والتفريعات التي عرفها التراث والفقه الإسلامي فيما بعد، لا سيما ما تعلق منه بالبحوث الغربية في مختلف تصنيفات المصادر الإسلامية" (107).**

وقد يفسر هذا مثلاً كيف نشأت خلافات وجدل بين الصحابة بعد وفاة النبي (ص) فيما يتصل بتصنيف بعض الآيات المنزلة، وهل ينبغي اعتبار البعض منها قرآناً ويشكل جزءاً من النص القرآني، أم ينبغي النظر إليها على أنها مجرد أدعية وليست من القرآن.

ولذلك حينما نقرأ أو ندرس الأحاديث القدسية يجب أن نستحضر كل هذه الاحتمالات. إن بعض الأحاديث القدسية قد تمثل ألفاظاً إلهية بالفعل، لكن لا ينبغي إضفاء هذه الصفة إلا على ما كان صحيحاً ومتواتراً من الحديث. فبينما يشتمل الكثير من الأحاديث القدسية على سلسلة أسانيد صحيحة، فإن الأحاديث القدسية تعتبر في مجملها بالأساس أحاديث آحاد، أي أنها رويت عن طريق سلسلة واحدة من الروايات. إن الادعاء بأن حديثاً ما هو كلام الله بالمعنى الحرفي للكلمة انطلاقاً من إسناد واحد هو خروج عن الاحتراز العلمي الواجب في هذا المقام. وقد تكبر المخاطرة إذا كنا أمام أحاديث من صنف الأحاديث الحسنة أو الضعيفة أو المرسلة. وكبديل عن هذا المنحى، من المحتمل أن يكون النبي (ص) قد عبَّر عن المعنى باستعمال ألفاظه الخاصة بترخيص من الله تعالى. فعلى الرغم من أن الله تعالى هو المتحدث في هذه الأحاديث القدسية وأن المعنى هو معنى صحيح، فإنه لا ينبغي لأي حديث - قدسياً كان أو غير قدسي- أن يُقبل بطريقة عمياء على أنه حقيقة مطلقة في كل حالة من الحالات. وينطبق هذا الأمر بالخصوص على مجموعات من الحديث تضم أحاديث ضعيفة، أو موضوعة أو ملفقة. فإذا كان القرآن الكريم

لا يمكن أن يكون موضع جدال (لأنه كلام الله الذي 'لا يأتيه الباطل من بين يديه ولا من خلفه') فإن إعمال مبدإ الشك الصحي هو مطلوب بالنسبة لجميع المصادر الأخرى، إلا إذا حظيت بالإجماع بأنها صحيحة. ففي غياب خبرة ودُرْبة خاصة، فإنه يتعين على الباحثين غير المتخصصين أن يطبقوا القاعدة التالية: 'إذا كان الحديث متفقاً مع القرآن الكريم جاز قبوله، وإذا كان مخالفاً للقرآن ينبغي رفضه. والله أعلم'.

أما بالنسبة للأحاديث القدسية التي تضمها المجموعة التي بين أيدينا، فإن آية الله حسن الشيرازي صاحب كتاب *كلمات الله* يؤكد لقرائه بأنها "قد رويت على يد مجموعة من محدثينا رحمهم الله" (587). وكما يذكر ذلك في مقدمته، فلقد كان "حريصاً' ألا يدخل المصادر غير الموثوقة " (25) في مجموعته المختارة من الحديث القدسي.

وعلى الرغم من كون هذه *الأحاديث الأربعين* قد رويت منذ أمد بعيد جداً بدون أسانيد، فإن سيد شيرازي –وهو الفقيه المتضلع الشهير– قد اعتبرها جديرة بالثقة. وكما لاحظ ذلك هو نفسه، "إن قوة النص تعد أيضاً دليلاً على صحته" (587). وإذا كان غياب أي إسناد من الأسانيد هو أمر مؤسف، فإن *الأربعين حديثاً* لا تعد استثناء بل تنتمي لمجموعة من الأحاديث والكتب التي تمت روايتها خلال قرون بدون أسانيد. إن القرآن في آخر المطاف ليست له أسانيد، كما أنه لا أسانيد *لنهج البلاغة* للإمام علي (ك)، الذي يعتبره الشيعة أقدس كتاب عندهم بعد الوحي الذي نزل على النبي محمد (ص)؛ *والصحيفة السجادية* للإمام علي زين العابدين –التي قد تكون ثالث أهم مصدر عند الشيعة– قد تمت روايتها أيضاً في بعض الأحيان بدون أسانيد. والحقيقة أن الكثير من أهم المصادر التي تنتمي للمرحلة الإسلامية الأولى بما فيها رسائل النبي (ص) وعهوده ومواثيقه ليست لها أسانيد. والحقيقة أيضاً أن طبيعة العمل في حد ذاته هو الذي يحدد مدى صحته. وعلى الرغم ص11 من عدم

اشتمالها على أي إسناد، فإن المرجعيات في معهد دار الحديث بقُمْ [الإيرانية] تعتبر *كلمات الله* من بين مجموعات الأحاديث المقبولة.

وكما يمكن لأي فقيه متضلع في الفقه الإسلامي أن يشهد على ذلك، فإن الأحاديث القدسية التي يضمها هذا الكتاب يبدو أنها في وفاق تام مع القرآن الكريم والسنة الصحيحة. فهي تضُوع منها نفحات طيب رب البيان ونسمات الفردوس، والإشراقات الإلهية الربانية، وقطرات من نهر الكوثر. إن هذه الأحاديث القدسية المشبعة بالمعاني الربانية، والتي تتخللها الآيات القرآنية، والوصايا النبوية، والأقوال الحكيمة، تعد بمثابة حديقة غناء مزهرة بالنباتات ذات الجمال الإلهي. إن هذه الأحاديث -وهي المنذرة المبشّرة، المستثيرة لمشاعر الألم والمحبة، لتثير أنبل وأجمل ما في الطبيعة البشرية من المعاني. إن [كتاب] *كلمة الله* هي النغس المفتق، والأريج المنعش لمشاعر الإيمان الصافي، الذي يناجي الأفراد في جميع صفاتهم وكل أبعادهم المادية والروحية والنفسية والاجتماعية؛ كما يرسل أسمى معاني الأمل فيما يختزنه الإنسان من الطاقات البناءة. إن هذه الأحاديث القدسية هي تعبيرات عن الأخلاق الإسلامية الفاضلة، فهي تحض الإنسان على السمو والاقتراب من المثال الإلهي الأسمى لكي يصبح الإنسان أكمل خلق الله، كما أراده الخالق سبحانه. إن الأحاديث القدسية، التي تحركها مبادئ العدالة، ومشاعر الشفقة والرحمة، لَتَطُوف بأنوارها الربانية حول محور المحبة الإلهية الفياضة على مستوى الكون. فالخير لا يأتي إلا من خير، وعطفاً على ذلك، وبالنسبة للأحاديث القدسية، فإن خيرها وبركتها لا تأتي إلا من الله تعالى سبحانه.

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## مصادر للباحثين

بما أن هذه الأحاديث القدسية ما هي في الحقيقة سوى عبارة عن أربعين قطرة من معين وبحر الروحانيات الشيعية، فللباحثين الذين يودون شفاء غليلهم أن يستزيدوا في البحث عن غيرها من المصادر. وفي هذه الحالة، بإمكانهم أن يطّلعوا على [كتاب] ***الجواهر السنية في الأحاديث القدسية*** من تأليف شيخ المحدثين محمد بن علي الحسين الحر العاملي، والمنشور من قبل معهد الوفاء ببيروت سنة 1984. وللمهتمين بمجموعات الحديث المصنفة من لدن الصوفية أو السنة، بإمكانهم الاطلاع على كتاب ***مشكاة الأنوار فيما روي عن الله سبحانه من الأخبار*** لصاحبه محيي الدين بن عربي، والذي يضم مائة حديث وحديثاً واحداً؛ وكتاب ***جمع الجوامع*** لجلال الدين السيوطي، والذي يشتمل على ستة وستين حديثاً قدسياً في ***الجامع الصغير***، ومائة وثلاثة وثلاثين حديثاً في ***الجامع الكبير***. وهناك كتاب ***الأحاديث القدسية الأربعينية*** للملا علي القاري، وكتاب ***الإتحافات السَّنية بالأحاديث القدسية*** لعبد الرؤوف المناوي، وكتاب ***الإتحافات السَّنية بالأحاديث القدسية*** (كذا) لصاحبه محمد بن محمود الغربزوني المدني. وهناك أخيراً كتاب ***الأحاديث القدسية*** للجنة القرآن والحديث التابعة للمجلس الأعلى للشؤون الإسلامية بمصر، والذي يعتبر أشمل وأكبر مجموعة للحديث إلى يومنا هذا. فإذا كان جل مجموعات الحديث القدسي لمؤلفين من السنة توجد أيضا في المصادر الشيعية، فإن مجموعات الحديث للعاملي والشيرازي تتميز بكونها توجد في المصادر الشيعية فقط.

## شكر وامتنان

أود أن أتقدم بعميق الشكر والامتنان إلى الدكتور سعيد منتاق وإلى الدكتور عمرو سلام على ما بذلاه من جهد في تصحيح ومراجعة ترجمتي للنصوص العربية إلى اللغة الإنجليزية. كما أتوجه بخالص الشكر لشارلز أبتون على التعليق القصير -لكن المتسم بكثير من الحصافة والعمق - الذي خص به هذا الكتاب الذي يتضمن تحفاً روحانية رائعة. كما أتقدم بشكر خاص إلى الدكتور عمرو سلام على ترجمته إلى اللغة العربية للنصوص التقديمية للكتاب. وأخيراً أود توجيه تشكراتي الخالصة لدار النشر 'كازي' على نشرها لهذه الأحاديث القدسية السامية التي ستسهم بإذن الله تعالى في تقوية إيمان المؤمنين، وتجويد أخلاقهم، وتساعد بحوله تعالى على سمو الروح نحو الأعالي.

## ظروف نشأة هذا العمل

**ترجمة عمرو سلام**

لقد صنف هذا العملَ آيةُ الله حسن الشيرازي الفقيه المحبوب الذي استُشهد خلال الحرب الأهلية اللبنانية. وقد تم نشره بدار الصادق ببيروت تحت عنوان *كلمات الله* سنة 1969. وقد أعادت نشره مؤسسة العلمي للمطبوعات ببيروت سنة 1984، ومؤسسة الوفاء ببيروت سنة 1985. أما الطبعة الأخيرة منه فقد نشرتها دار العلوم ببيروت سنة 2006. ولقد تمت ترجمة العمل إلى اللغة الأُرْدية على يد مولانا سيد علي محمد إجلال اللخنفي. كما تُرجم إلى اللغة الإنجليزية للمرة الأولى على يد س. م. زكي بقري، ونشَره المجلس الإسلامي للتوجيه بكندا سنة 1988 تحت عنوان *كلمة الله*. وقد تم نشر نسخة منقَّحة من هذا الكتاب في عدة طبعات من قبل مطبوعات أنصاريان بإيران سنوات 1997 و1999 و2003. لكن للأسف، كانت النسخة المترجمة الأصلية رديئة جداً؛ وأما النسخة التي تمت مراجعتها جزئياً والتي لم تتم الإشارة فيها إلى عمل المُراجع –ولا تم الاعتراف بالمُراجع أصلاً، فإنها ظلت نسخة لا تشفي الغليل. فإذا كانت مختلف الطبعات التي نشرتها مطبوعات أنصاريان تضم نسخة مراجَعَة مترجمة إلى اللغة الإنجليزية، فإن الراقن قد ارتكب عدداً كبيراً من الأخطاء حينما قام ص13 بطبع النص العربي، إذ أنه لم يكتف بتكرار بعض الكلمات فحسب، بل قفز على عدة جمل نتيجة النسيان أو السهو، كما قام بخلط رتب الكثير من الجمل. فإذا كانت النسخة الإنجليزية لدار المنشورات أنصاريان قد تم إضافة تحسينات عليها، فإن نصها الأصلي العربي كان كارثياً. وبالمقابل، فإن الطبعة التي نشرها المجلس الأعلى للتوجيه [بكندا] تشتمل على ترجمة سيئة جداً؛ إلا أن النص العربي الذي يلي الترجمة كان مقبولاً على العموم بالرغم من وجود بعض الحذف غير المتعمَّد.

وكما يمكن لأي شخص متمكن من اللغتين العربية والإنجليزية أن يؤكد ذلك، فإن المترجم لم يُبِنْ عن إلمامه بأي واحدة من اللغتين. ويبدو ذلك جلياً سواء في الطبعة الكندية أو الطبعة الإيرانية للكتاب. فالترجمة الإنجليزية تضم جملاً لا وجود لها في النسخة الأصلية العربية؛ ثم هناك جمل عربية بأكملها لم تتم ترجمتها؛ وترتيب الجمل في النص كان في الغالب ترتيباً معيباً، كما أنه لم يتم إثبات مراجع الآيات القرآنية. وإذن فإما أن المترجم اعتمد في ترجمته على نسخة أُرْديّة رديئة، وإما أن معرفته باللغة العربية كانت ضعيفة. وهذا لا يعني أن ترجمته -رغم ما بها من عيوب- لم تكن ذات نفع للكثير من المسلمين. فعلى الرغم من الأخطاء التركيبية والإملائية والأسلوبية والنحوية والدلالية، وفي استعمال الأزمنة والاستعمال اللغوي، وأخطاء في المطابقة في العدد والتأنيث والتذكير، فالترجمة مع ذلك تعطي فكرة عن النص الأصلي، وإن تم ذلك من خلال عدسات غير شفافة. وعلى الرغم مما شابها من عيوب، فإن ترجمة بقري [تحت عنوان] *كلمة الله* قد رحب بها الكثير من المتحدثين باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة غير لغة الأم، والمتحدثين بالإنجليزية الهندية - الباكستانية غير الفصيحة، إلى جانب الأشخاص الذين اعتنقوا الإسلام حديثاً، المتعطشين للارتواء بالروحانية الإسلامية إلى درجة جعلتهم مستعدين لشرب ماء بالرغم من عدم صفائه. ذلك لأنه في زمن الشدة، وحين تشح الموارد، فإن المياه الكدرة بإمكانها أن تطفئ الظمأ الروحي، وتسعف حياة الناس الروحية. بالطبع، إذا حضر الماء الزُّلال، وكثرت العيون الصافية، فإن الارتواء بماء كدر من شأنه أن يسبب المغص والأسقام فيما بعد. إذا كانت الأحاديث القدسية هي كلمة الله حقاً، فإن المطلوب من المترجمين أن يتعاملوا معها بنفس العناية والاهتمام الذي يولونه لترجمة القرآن الكريم. إن ترجمة عمل دنيوي بكيفية رديئة هي إساءة للكاتب، أما ترجمة رديئة للأحاديث القدسية فهي إساءة لله تعالى، وسُوءُ أدبٍ مع الخالق سبحانه. فالمسألة لا تنحصر فقط

في الجانب الجمالي والبلاغي الأدبي -والتي من الممكن تجاوزها في بعض الظروف- فالقضية قضية معنى ومضمون. إنه لأمر محزن أن نلاحظ الرداءة التي تعكسها حالة "العلم" الإسلامي والفقه المتخصص الحالية، حينما نجد الكثير من الكلمات -إن لم نقل أغلبها- في كتاب *كلمات الله* قد سيئت ترجمتها إلى اللغة الإنجليزية. علينا أن نفهم أن الإسلام يتأسس على الإيمان الصحيح كما يتأسس على العمل الصحيح، بحيث لا يمكن تصور وجود أحدهما دون وجود الآخر. فإذا كان للناس أن يؤمنوا بأعمال مثل *كلمة الله* ويعملوا بها نصّاً وروحاً، فإنه يتعين على المترجمين بصفة خاصة، سواء من الناحية الأخلاقية أو من الناحية الأكاديمية، أن يتأكدوا من دقتها، وإلا عملنا على حَقْن أذهان المؤمنين الصادقين بمفاهيم مغلوطة، وكنا سبباً في ارتكابهم لتصرفات خاطئة. فإذا كان ادعاء الكمال يجب تركه لله تعالى جل شأنه، وله وحده سبحانه، فإنه لا يجوز مع ذلك ادخار أي جهد أو ثمن حينما نقوم بترجمة أعمال إسلامية. ذلك لأن الترجمات الرديئة تسيء إساءة كبرى لصورة الإسلام. فقد يتساءل حينئذ المتحدثون باللغة الإنجليزية ومثقفوها مردّدين: "وإذن، ما هو هذا الإله المسمى الله، الذي لا يستطيع مجرد تركيب جملة سليمة من الناحية النحوية؟". وإذا كان الله تعالى جميلاً لا يحب إلا ما هو جميل، فإنه يتعين علينا أن نستحضر على الدوام الإحساس بالسمو والتعالي. وخلافاً للطريقة التي كان طابع الإهمال وعدم الدقة وغياب الإتقان هو المسيطر عليها، والتي تمت بها ترجمة كتاب *كلمة الله*، تلك الترجمة التي ظلت متداولة لمدة غير قصيرة، فإن الترجمة الجديدة قد خضعت لمجهود مضاعف من الجد والاجتهاد اللازمين، بما في ذلك الحرص على الإعداد العلمي الرصين، وإخضاع العمل للمراجعة من قبل الزملاء المتخصصين، ثم -وبصفة أساسية على رأس كل هذا- التحلي بأكبر قدر من تقوى الله تعالى عند القيام بهذا العمل. والآن وقد تم إخراج *كتاب كلمة* الله في ترجمة ثلاثية

اللغة بالدقة المطلوبة، والتعبير الفصيح في اللغات الثلاث، انطلاقاً من أصلها العربي، فإن عدداً أكبر لا محالة من المستفيدين من قراء اللغة العربية والإنجليزية والفرنسية والإسبانية سيجدون ضالتهم في هذا الكتاب الجميل. والله تعالى أسألُ أن يتجاوز عن أية زلة قد تكون تسربت إلى هذا العمل، كما أسأله تعالى أن يصفح عن زلات من سبقونا من المترجمين، مهما بلغت درجة تلك الزلات. وكما قال ألكساندر بوب: "إن الخطأ من طبيعة البشر، وأما العفو فهو من شيم الإله وصفاته".

## تصدير

## بقلم شارلز آبتون

**ترجمة عمرو سلام**

إن الأحاديث القدسية التي يضمها الكتاب الذي بين أيدينا والتي تحمل عنوان *الأحاديث الأربعون القدسية* هي أحاديث ذات قيمة قصوى لأنها بمثابة جسر يربط بين ظاهر الإسلام وباطنه، كما تربط آيات الله تعالى بين ما هو "في الآفاق" وما هو "في النفوس"، (مصداقاً لقول الله تعالى في كتابه العزيز ﴿"سَنُرِيهِمْ آياتِنَا فِي الآفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ"﴾ (41: 53). إن تعليقي على هذه الأحاديث القدسية سينطلق إلى حد بعيد من زاوية باطنية صوفية. وهي ليست على أية حال الرؤية الوحيدة التي يمكن تناول هذه الأحاديث من خلالها.

يمكن قراءة هذه الأحاديث القدسية كحضٍّ [إلهي] على الأخلاق الفاضلة، وكحِكَمٍ عملية. كما يمكن قراءتها بنفس المسوّغ الذي يحيل على المعاني الباطنية للقرآن الكريم، والتي يركز عليها أهل التصوف، والمرتبطة غالباً بـ"الأحوال" والـ"ماقامات". يمكن تعريف 'الأحوال' و'المقامات'، بكونها مجموعة التجارب والاستبصارات، وعمليات التطهر الروحي، والتحنث ونشدان الفضائل، والرحمات التي يملأ بها المرء قلبه وهو في حضرة الله تعالى كأنه يراه. ليس هناك من سبيل للفصل بين ما هو ظاهر وما هو باطن في الوحي الإسلامي إلا في عالم الإيمان، وإيمان محرّف في هذه الحالة؛ ذلك لأن مقتضيات الشريعة وعلوم الطريقة معاً يستمدان مصدرهما من القرآن الكريم. ولقد بذلتُ ما يكفي من الجهد لتبيان هذه المسألة في كتابي الذي نشرتُه مؤخراً صوفيا بيرينيس سنة 2015 تحت عنوان ***الليل والنهار على طريق التصوف***. فإذا ما تم الاستغناء عن أحد مُكَوِّنَي الإسلام المتمثلَيْن في الجانب الظاهر والجانب الباطن في الإسلام، فإن هذا الدين الذي جاء به النبي محمد صلوات

الله وسلامه عليه يفقد طبيعته الحق. ليس هناك من طبيعة أخلاقية لا ترمز في نفس الوقت إلى واقع روحي صوفي، كما أنه لا وجود لواقع روحي صوفي لا يعبر عن نفسه بكيفية طبيعية كفضيلة أخلاقية. ذلك لأن 'المعاكسين' (antinomians) الذين يعتقدون بأن المعرفة الروحية تلغي الفضيلة الأخلاقية والشريعة، هم مضلَّلون إلى حد بعيد؛ وسبب ذلك أن بعض الحقائق الروحية تتسامى بالفعل على البعد الأخلاقي لكنها لا تلغيه أبداً.

ص31

غير أن الصوفية يؤكدون على أسبقية الباطن على الظاهر؛ والسؤال هنا هل هذه الرؤية هي مجرد تضخم للأنا ونتيجة لعجرفة مزعجة عند فئة من الناس الذين يزكون أنفسهم، كما يعتقد البعض؟ للأسف قد يكون الأمر كذلك في بعض الأحيان، ذلك لأن كل حقيقة قد تصبح صنماً يعبده فرد أو مجموعة إذا ادعوا أنهم يتملكونها بدل الخضوع لها والسير على هديها.

لكن الواقع هو أن الذين يفهمون بعمق معاني القرآن الباطنية ذات الارتباط بالطريقة والحقيقة هم مؤهلون غالباً وبنفس المستوى من إتقان قواعد الشريعة المستمدة من القرآن، بينما تجد أولئك الذين يتخصصون في أمور الشريعة غالباً ما لا يفهمون إلا القليل أو لا شيء في أمور التفسير ذات الصلة بالطريقة والحقيقة. وهذا لا ينفي أن البعض ممن يسمون أنفسهم "باطنية" اختلقوا تفاسير وتأويلات مزيفة بغرض تمطيط قواعد الشرع القرآنية وتغييرها، إلى درجة إلغاء قواعد الشريعة المنصوص عليها في القرآن نفسه. لكن هذا ليس من سلوك المتصوفة الأمناء الورعين المحافظين على النهج القويم. وفي نظر هذا [الكاتب]، إن مسألة العلاقة التي يجب أن تسود بين الباطن والظاهر، على أقل تقدير عندما يتم تعريف هذين المفهومين على أنهما من جهة "صوفية روحانية"، ومن جهة اخرى "نضال من أجل تحقيق عدالة اجتماعية"، أي ما يمكن أن يؤوَّل على أنه هو المقصد الأساس من الدين برمته، والمتمثل في السعي لوقاية

النفس وحمايتها عن طريق اتباع أوامر الله تعالى والاعتراف من معين رحماته؛ فمن يا ترى هو الرابح ومن الخاسر في وضعية من كان قادراً على إشاعة العدالة والخير في العالم كله، لكنه استحق النار بسبب فساد في شخصه؟ ووضعية من لم يكن له أي تأثير على أوضاع الناس في هذه الدنيا لكنه وقى نفسه من غواية الفساد وأحب الله تعالى حباً صادقاً فاستحق بذلك الجنة؟ من الضروري هنا أن نضيف ما يلي: إن الصوفية يحملون ثنائية "الباطن" و"الظاهر" إلى مستوى أعلى مما هو عليه الأمر هنا. فهم يصفون "أهل الظاهر" بأنهم 'أولئك الذين يطمعون في الجنة جزاء لما عملوا من الأعمال الصالحة؛ ويخصصون صفة "أهل ا لباطن" لمن يسعون لولوج الحضرة الإلهية في هذه الحياة الدنيا [قبل الآخرة].

ويؤكد الصوفية أن أخذ 'البيعة' عن شيخ الطريقة -هذا إذا كان هذا الشيخ منتمياً لسلسلة غير منقطعة من [الشيوخ العارفين] المشهود لهم بالورع والصلاح، من شأنه أن يضع المريد في اتصال أعمق وأوثق بالله تعالى مقارنة بالمؤمن العادي، --هذا فيما عدا إذا أراد الله تعالى أن ينشر رحمته على من يشاء من عباده من هذه الفئة الأخيرة. قد يبدو للبعض أن هذا الكلام ينطوي على سلوك فيه ادعاء وكبْر آثم، أو نوع من الممارسة الشركية أو الغيبية، أو محاولة إدخال نوع من الأفكار الرهبانية المندسة إلى الإسلام. ص32 كيف يمكن لمجرد حضور شيخ من المتصوفة سواء أكان حضوراً قريباً أو بعيداً أن يؤثر في المريد؟ لكن تصوَّرْ لو أنه قدر لامرئ أن يكون قد عايش النبي (ص) ووجد نفسه في حضرته، أو بحضرة أحد صحابته المقربين، فكيف يملك لنفسه ألا يتأثر؟ ومن يستطيع أن ينفي أن علاقة تربطه بشخصية ذات صفات عالية من البطولة أو القداسة العميقة لا يكون لها تأثير أساس على تحديد مسار حياته، حتى ولو لم يعش معه أو يعاشره بصفة يومية؟ لقد كان النبي محمد ( ص) بمثابة تجسيد للقرآن الكريم. أو كان القرآن مجسداً فيه، ولذلك كان لا بد أن

يستمد بعضُ صحابته المقربين منه قدراً أكبرمن التربية النبوية، ودرجات عليا من البركة المحمدية بالمقارنة مع باقي جمهور المؤمنين. والصوفية يعرفون أن أكثر الناس انفتاحاً على تلك التربية النبوية وأقدر الناس على استيعابها وتمثلها كان صهره علي بن أبي طالب (ك)، الذي خلَّف عبر اقترانه بفاطمة الزهراء (ض) كل أئمة وأسياد آل البيت.

قد يدعي البعض في كثير من الأحيان أن للصوفية أنواعاً من التربية "السرية" التي يمكن نعتها بكونها سلوكات ابتداعية، وإلا لماذا يبقون عليها طي السرية؟ أُجيبُ في البدء أنه لم يوجد عبر التاريخ وإلى حد الساعة أي نوع من التصوف يمكن صياغته والتعبير عنه، إلاّ وأُلفت بشأنه كتب في مكان ما أو زمن ما عبر التاريخ. ثانياً، لكل علم تعليمات ومحتوى تقني خاص به، لا يتذوقها ولا يفهمها إلاّ من كان على اطلاع على ذلك العلم، أو كان ينوي دراسته مستقبلاً؛ والقصد هنا بـ'التعليمات'، تلك المتعلقة بظروف خاصة تتعلق بسياقات محددة. ثالثاً أود فقط أن أشير إلى أن أغلب الأشياء في هذه الحياة الدنيا تبقى عملياً أسراراً، لأنه يستعصي التعبير والإفصاح عنها بلغة الإنسان المتداولة. فعلى سبيل المثال، نَزرٌ قليل فقط من تجربتك الحالية في اللحظة الراهنة يمكنك التعبير عنه تعبيراً دقيقاً وشاملاً وبيناً. والحال أنه حتى إذا قلتَ إنك تمكنتَ من إنجاز ذلك المسعى، فإن موضوع اللحظة سرعان ما ينفلت منك ويصبح شيئاً طواه الزمان وأصبح في عداد الماضي.

لقد كانت مهمة محمد (ص) تتمثل في القيام بدور الموجه الروحي والزعيم السياسي. وكزعيم سياسي، لقد قام بنشرالعدالة ومعاني الرحمة في المجتمع الذي عاش فيه، لكن ص33 الغاية من كل عمل اجتماعي قام به كان هو خلق الشروط التي يجد فيها عدد متزايد من النفوس أن الباطن يسبق الظاهر، لأن الدنيا تسير حثيثاً نحو النهاية والفناء، لكن الآخرة هي الأبقى والأدوم.

لقد خلق الله تعالى بعض الناس ليكونوا أساساً من النوع 'الظاهري'، وخلق آخرين ليكونوا من النوع 'الباطني'، كما خلق نوعا ثالثاً من الناس ممن يمزجون بين 'الظاهر' و'الباطن' بدرجات متفاوتة. فكان النبي (ص) وعلي بن أبي طالب (ك) من هذا الصنف الأخير. وعلى خلاف هذا كان بعض الصحابة -ومنهم عمر بن الخطاب- ذوي طبع ظاهري، بينما كان آخرون لا سيما أهل الصُفة، من أهل الباطن.

إن أهل الصّفة (أو أصحاب السقيفة) -للإشارة فلفظ 'صُفَّة' اشتقت منه كلمة 'sofa' الإنجليزية) كانوا جماعة من الزهاد التأمليين المتشبثين ببيت النبي (ص)، وكانوا يمضون جل أوقاتهم في العبادة والتأمل والتدبر وذكر الله. إن الكثير ممن بحثوا في كلمة "صوفي" يقولون إنها إما جاءت من 'الصفاء' (أي من الطهارة والنقاء)، أو من 'الصوف'، إشارةً إلى لباس الفقراء الخشن. والصوفية عادة ما يسمون أنفسهم 'الفقراء' أي المساكين. لكنني أعتقد شخصياً أن يكون أصل الكلمة هو 'أهل الصفة' الذين يبدو أنهم كانوا الطائفة التي تفرعت منها حركة التصوف (proto-sufis). ومما يثير الاهتمام أن محمداً (ص) في العهد [أو الميثاق] الذي كتبه لنصارى نجران يقول ما [معناه] فيما يلي: "لا يجوز فرض الجزية ولا أية ضريبة أخرى على الرهبان ولا على الأساقفة ولا على لابسي الصوف من الناس النساك الذين اعتزلوا الناس في الجبال والأماكن الأخرى الخالية من السكان". ولذلك فإن لباس الصوف كان منذ وقت النبي (ص) مرتبطاً بالزهاد المنقطعين للعبادة. وقال النبي (ص) في مقام آخر: "ما من نبي إلاّ واشتغل بالرعي". وقد اشتغل (ص) هو نفسه راعياً لغنم أهله في فترة من حياته المبكرة. ولذلك فمن المحتمل أن يكون للباس الصوف إحالة رمزية على الوظيفة النبوية.

إن الباحثين المندرجين تحت خانة 'المستشرقين' والذين ظهروا مع فترة الاستعمار الأوربي قد سببوا لنا أذى عميقاً حينما خاضوا عن جهل في تخمينات

غير مسؤولة حول الطبيعة الحقيقية للتصوف. فحسب بعض هؤلاء، كان أصل التصوف مجموعة من البدع المسيحية، أو بعض الأفكار البوذية، أوبعض الممارسات الشامانية التي أُدخلت إلى الإسلام. بعبارة أخرى، كان أصل التصوف أي شيء ما عدا أن يكون قد استمد جذوره من السنة النبوية والقرآن الكريم؛ وهما المصدران اللذان كان الجيل الأول من المستشرقين منحازين ضده بشكل عميق. ص34 وهؤلاء لا يميزون بين الغابة والشجرة، أو قُل إنهم عاجزون حتى على تحديد الأشجار نفسها والتعرف عليها. وفي الوقت الذي لم يعد فيه هؤلاء الباحثون ذوو المرجعية الأوربية المتمركزة على نفسها يحتلون واجهة الأحداث، فإن دعاويهم الباطلة -بما في ذلك فكرة التصوف التي ينعتونها بكونها بدعة تتعارض مع النهج الصحيح للعقيدة- ما فتئت تروج له الإيديولوجيا السلفية بشتى الطرق. ومن المفارقة العجيبة أن يدّعي السلفيون أنهم يرفضون كل تأثير غربي ويريدون العودة بالإسلام إلى صفائه الأول. والحقيقة أنه ليست هناك طريقة صوفية واحدة من بين الطرق الصوفية الكبرى إلاَّ وتجد لها مرجعاً أساساً في القرآن الكريم، حيث إن كتاب الله يتحدث عن ۩"رِجالٌ لا تُلْهيهِمْ تِجارَةٌ وَلاَ بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللهِ، يُقيمُونَ الصَّلاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكاةَ، يَخافُونَ يَوْماً تَتَقَلَّبُ فيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالأَبْصارُ"۩ (ق، 37:24). فإذا أخذنا "إقام لصلاة" حرفياً على أنها صلاة لا تنقطع، فهذا لا يمكن أن ينطبق إلا على الممارسة الصوفية المتعلقة بذكر الله، أي على ترديد اسم الله سراً وبدون انقطاع، أو ترديد عبارة فيها ذكر لاسم الله تعالى. وبالتالي إن كان الأمر كذلك، فإن الآية القرآنية (ق، 29: 45) هي إحالة أخرى على ذكر الله حيث يقول الله عز وجل فيها: ۩"إِنَّ الصَّلاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللهِ أَكْبَرُ"۩، ولو أن السياق يحتمل أيضاً معنى أن 'ذكر الله' يُقصد منه تلاوة القرآن. (إن التأويل أو التفسير 'الباطني' للآية: "رِجالٌ لاَ تُلْهيهِمْ تِجارَةٌ وَلاَ بَيْعٌ ...[الآية]"، يمكن أن يكون على النحو التالي: إن هؤلاء الأشخاص الذين لا يلهيهم شيء عن ذكر الله هم

أشخاص لا يساومون الله تعالى على دخول الجنة مستقبلاً [ أي في الآخرة] مقابل ما قاموا به من عمل صالح، بل يضحّون بكل شيء من أجل لقاء الله تعالى هنا والآن في هذه الدنيا؛ ليس هذا هو المعنى الصحيح للآية، والتي تحيل بطريقة بديهية على أولئك الذين لا تأخذهم مشاغلهم وتلهيهم عن أداء صلواتهم المفروضة، لكنه المعنى 'الباطني' المستتر inner. فالجانب الظاهر والجانب المستتر هما متلازمان تلازماً وثيقاً في القرآن الكريم، ويعتمدان على بعضهما البعض ويفسران بعضهما البعض.

لا يمكننا أن ننفي أن جميع الديانات تأخذ عناصر من العقائد الأخرى. ولهذا السبب فإن ولئك الباحثين العلمانيين الذين ينفون حقيقة الوحي الإلهي غالباً ما يسارعون إلى استعمال هذه الحقيقة البديهية لتقديم الديانة (أية ديانة كانت) على أنها مجرد مرقّعة من التأثيرات المختلفة التي قام الإنسان برتقها بحذق وبراعة، خدمة إما لشعوذة ما، أو سعياً لتحقيق طموح سياسي. لقد اقتبس الإسلام بالفعل عناصر من الديانات ص35 التي سبقته والتي عاشت بجانبه؛ فهذا أمر لا مجال لإنكاره. إن اللغة العربية التي قرأ النبي (ص) بها القرآن هي نفس اللغة التي كان الوثنيون العرب فيما مضى يستعملونها في عبادتهم، واستمروا في استعمالها كذلك بجانب القرآن الذي أصبح يُرتَّلُ على أسماعهم. فهل يعني هذا أن الإسلام كان مجرد عملية إصلاح أو إعادة مزج لممارسات ومعتقدات وثنية؟ بالطبع لا. وينطبق الأمر نفسه على العناصر التي كان الإسلام يشترك فيها مع الديانات النصرانية واليهودية والزرادشتية (وفي بعض الأحيان بالنسبة لبعض المتصوفة) مع المذاهب والتيارات الدينية في آسيا الوسطى. إن الإسلام كدين جديد أنزله الله تعالى، جذب إليه -كما يفعل المغناطيس- عناصر استمدها من الحضارات المحيطة به ومن ماضي البشرية عموماً؛ فتبنى من تلك العناصر ما يمكنه تبنّيه واستعماله لتناغمه مع الوحي الإسلامي، وألقى جانباً بما لا ينسجم مع ذلك الوحي. وقد تم إضفاء الطابع الإسلامي على كل شيء تم اقتراضه عن

الفترة السابقة للإسلام، ومن الديانات غير الإسلامية. ويمكن التمثيل على ذلك بالمعمار البيزنطي الذي احتضنه الإسلام وأضفى عليه طابعه بشكل كامل؛ ذلك أنه يمكن اعتبار العناصر المأخوذة من الفترات السابقة، ومن الديانت الأخرى، بمثابة ضيوف وردوا على الدين الإسلامي فاستضافهم فكان هو المضيف الذي عليه القيام بواجب الضيافة من إطعام وغيره. فلو تم مثلاً إثبات أن النسّاك المسيحيين كانوا يرتدون لباس الصوف (الخشن) قبل أن يفعل ذلك المتصوفة المسلمون، وأنهم كانوا يرددون اسم الله (قبلهم) فهذا لا يبرهن على الإطلاق ولا يمكن أن يعتبر دليلاً على أن التصوف ليس له أصل أو طبيعة إسلامية. وعلى الرغم من هذا فإن بعض المسلمين المتنطّعين يعتبرون ذكر الله الذي يقوم به الصوفية بدعة. فالمسيحيون ال'هيزوخستيون' Hesychasts يذكرون اسم عيسى بن مريم في ما يسمونه "قداس القلب"؛ والصوفية (المسلمون) يذكرون اسم الله. فهل يجوز أن يُمنع المسلمون سواء أكانوا متصوفة أو غير متصوفة من ذكر اسم الله بدعوى أن المسيحيين يذكرون اسم عيسى؟ الحقيقة ان الذين يدعون الدفاع عن الإسلام مما يعتبرونه بدعة أو هرطقة، (أو قُلْ الدفاع عن الإسلام من نفسه)، يتصرفون بمنتهى السخافة. ندعو الله تعالى أن يجازيهم على صدق نيتهم (بالقدر الذي تكون عندهم تلك النية الصادقة)، ويشفيهم من عمى قلوبهم وبصائرهم.

أنا أشاطر رأي الدكتور مورو حينما يبين خطأً ورد عند الباحث جوهن ل. إسبوزيتو القائل إن التصوف الإسلامي جاء 'كحركة إصلاحية'. إن الصوفية لم يأتوا لإصلاح الإسلام، ذلك لأنه بقدر إقامتهم لما يشبه كياناً عقدياً مستقلاً estate داخل الأمة الإسلامية، بقدر ما عملوا على التشبث بدرجة وعمق البعد الروحي الذي جاء به وعلّمه النبي محمد (ص)، ص36 وعلّمه أصحابه من بعده، لا سيما وخصوصاً علي بن أبي طالب (ك)، وساروا على ذلك النهج، عندما بدأت الأمة الإسلامية –وبصفة خاصة تحت حكم الأمويين، في الابتعاد

تدريجياً عن االنهج الذي أرساه النبي محمد (ص). مثلاً، كان معروفاً عن النبي (ص) أنه كان لا يحتفظ بأي مال عنده لمصاريفه الخاصة، ولا يحتفظ بطعام في منزله إلا ما كان ضرورياً لاستهلاك يوم واحد. ولهذا السبب، حينما جاء من حافظ على هذا الجانب من السنة المحمدية ممن سيعرفون فيما بعد بـ'المتصوفة'، في الوقت الذي ازداد المجتمع الإسلامي نأياً عنها، أصبحوا يعرفون بـ'الزهّاد'. ومن الطبيعي أن يسعى هؤلاء ما وسعهم الأمر ذلك إلى الحفاظ على الإسلام في أصالته وطهره الروحاني الإسلامي، وأن يبحثوا عن بعضهم البعض ويوالوا بعضهم البعض.

وعند قراءة كتاب ***متصوفة الأندلس*** *The Sufis of Andalusia* لمحيي الدين بن عربي (1165–1240م) والذي قام بترجمته وتحقيقه رالف أوستين، يمكن تكوين صورة عن طبيعة التصوف بعد مرور ستة قرون على وفاة النبي (ص). فمن المؤكد أن يكتشف المرء أن متصوفة بن عربي في زمانه ومكانه (الأندلس) الذي عاش فيه، كانوا أكثر اندماجاً في مجتمع الأمة الإسلامية مما هو عليه الحال اليوم. فلقد تم تقديم التصوف في ذلك الكتاب لا كما عرف في اللاحق من الأيام كمنظومة مستقلة خاصة، ولكن كمنتج ضروري للفيض الجارف الذي عرفته مشاعر الورع والتقوى عند المسلمين. في ذلك الوقت، لم يكن التصوف، قد عرف بعد ذلك التقسيم والتفريع إلى زوايا صوفية منكفئة على نفسها حيث بدأت في الظهور بدايةً من القرن الثاني عشر الميلادي، بل كانت عبارة عن شبكات واسعة من الزملاء المريدين التابعين لنفس الأشياخ المرشدين، ويشتركون في نفس الفهم للطريقة ويقومون بنفس الطقوس والأفعال.

أما بالنسبة للقولة التي جاءت على لسان علي بن الحسين العاملي والتي ذكرها الدكتور مورو في المقدمة، والتي تقول: "إن التصوف هو التشيع، والتشيع هو التصوف" فهو قول يصح في مناح لكن لا يصح في مناح أخرى. إن سلسلات معظم الطرق الصوفية تنتهي إلى كون النبي محمد (ص) هو أول مرشد

صوفي، وان علياً (ك) هو مريده الكامل-رغم أن سلسلة صوفية على الأقل - وهي الطريقة النقشبندية- تعود في أصلها إلى محمد (ص) عن طريق أبي بكر الصديق. إن الاتفاق على أن شيخ الطريقة (أوالمرشد /المربي) يستمد أهليته من كونه جزءاً من سلسلة متصلة الحلقات من التأثير الروحي تصل في امتدادها إلى النبي محمد (ص)، ويستمده من إذن رباني مباشر، من شأن هذا الاتفاق ص37 أن يجعله شبيهاً بمرتبة الإمام عند آل البيت للشيعة قاطبة. وأما فكرة أن الإمام الغائب الذي يتصرف بواسطة، فهي فكرة تشبه في جوانب كثيرة منها الفكرة الصوفية القائلة بوجود مجموعة من أهل الله [من الأشياخ المربين] الذين يخضعون جميعاً للشيخ القطب [الرباني] صاحب زمانه الذي يكون معروفاً في العادة، وقد لا يكون معروفاً. ومن بين أقطاب الصوفية نجد على الأقل إمامين من الشيعة هما علي بن أبي طالب (ك) وجعفرالصادق. غير ان هذا لا يعني أن التصوف هو مرادف للتشيع على جميع الصعد والمناحي، لا سيما بعد غياب الإمام الثاني عشر؛ ولا يعني أنه مرادف لمذاهب أهل السنة. فالتَّصوف في حقيقته وواقعه، طرقه وزواياه الخاصة به. فبينما يمكننا أن نجد أن بعض الطرق الصوفية (مثل الطريقة "النعمة اللاهية") تعتمد المذهب الشيعي، على الأقل اسمياً، فإن معظم الطرق الصوفية تتّبع أحد المذاهب السنية المعروفة.

وأخيراً علينا أن نتناول إحالة ذكرها الدكتور مورو للكاتب جوهن أ. رونار Renard، حيث إن تلك الإحالة تبين مطبّات يسقط فيها الكثير من الباحثين المرموقين بصورة روتينية، نظراً لعدم إلمامهم الكافي بميدان الماورائيات metaphysics: فبسبب ميل بعض الأحاديث القدسية بالتحديد ميلاً مبالغاً فيه إلى القول بفكرة اللزوم والمحايثة immanence التي تمس بفكرة التسامي الإلهي transcendence، فإن عديد المسلمين يعتبرون تلك الأحاديث أحاديث مزورة". والقصد بالتزوير هنا أنه من المحتمل أن "تكون تلك الأحاديث من وضع واختلاق المتصوفة". هنا يمكننا أن نرى بوضوح بعض الأشياء التي

سيء فهمها فيما يتعلق بالتمييز بين فكرتي "الظاهر" و"الباطن": فالقائل بالباطن يمكن أن يسأل القائل بالظاهر الذي يشتكي من فكرة طغيان الحضور الإلهي (أو اللزوم والمحايثة الإلهية immanence): "وهل القرآن الكريم يميل ميلاً مبالغاً فيه نحوالباطن في آيات مثل: "۩"وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ"۩ (50: 16)؛ أو في الآية: ۩"فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللهِ"۩ (2: 115)؟ بالإضافة إلى هذا، فإنه ليس هناك في الواقع ما يجعل الفهم الصحيح لفكرة الباطن/اللزوم والمحايثة تمس بمبدإ التسامي (أو الظاهر) الإلهي، ذلك لأن الله تعالى بسبب ذلك التسامي تحديداً، وبسبب كفاية الله تعالى بنفسه، وباستقلاله الكلي بذاته عن أي مخلوق من مخلوقاته، فهو قادر على أن يكون حاضراً في أي مكان شاء؛ ولا يُعجزه في ذلك زمان ولا مكان ولا عدد ولا شكل ولا مادة. وبالتأكيد، فإن فهماً محرَّفاً لفكرة الباطن /اللزوم قد تؤدي بشكل خطير بمن له اطلاع محدود، إلى فكرة الحلول والتجسيد وعبادة الأوثان أو الشرك. لكن ص38 الفكرة الأخرى الخاطئة أيضاً وبنفس المقدار القائلة إن صفة اللزوم/المحايثة الإلهية يمكن أن تمس بشكل من الأشكال بصفة التسامي الالهية، من شأنها أن تنتج صورة محرفة عن الله تعالى على أنه كائن لا يمكن للبشرية على الأرض أن تتواصل معه، وبالتالي فلا صلاة ولا دعاء ولا عمل صالح يمكن أن يصل إليه، أو يستجيب هو له، كما أن رحمته تعالى لن تجد لها طريقاً إلينا. فإن صحَّت هذه الصورة عن الله تعالى، فإن حضَّ القرآن الكريم المتكرر على فعل الخير واجتناب الشر وذكر الله تعالى وشكره على نعمه، يصبح بدون معنى. فإن كان الله تعالى متسامياً بالمعنى الحرفي الصارم للكلمة، ولا وجود لأثر اللزوم والمحايثة (الباطن) في صفاته، فإننا نكون في وضعية مَن لم يتسنَّ له حتى مجرد بالسماع به جل شأنه.

لقد سعت الدراسات الماورائية الإسلامية إلى حماية فكرة اللزوم الإلهية من مخاطر التجسيد والحلول بتعريفها كفرة التشبيه التي تقابل (ولكن أيضاً تكمل)

فكرة التنزيه: (أي ان الله تعالى" ليس كمثله شيء"). فحينما تشير سورة الفاتحة إلى الله تعالى على أنه ﴿"رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ [...] مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ"﴾ فهي تشبّهه سبحانه بمالك أو حاكم في هذه الحياة الدنيا. بينما في سورة الإخلاص [حين يشير الله تعالى إلى نفسه] بأنه ﴿"لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ"﴾، فإن الآية تؤكد بمعنى آخر على أن الله تعالى هو متسامي بالمطلق، وفوق أي تشبيه. فالله تعالى ليس مرتبطاً بأي خلق من مخلوقاته ولا معتمداً عليه؛ ولو حدث أن تم تشبيهه في مجالات ما بمخلوقاته في بعض الأوجه. فهو غني عن المخلوقات، لكن المخلوقات فقيرة إليه بشكل مطلق. إنها في حاجة إليه في وجودها وفي صفاتها المميزة، وهذا أمر لازم بالضرورة، ذلك لانه ليس هناك من مصدر غير الله تعالى يمكن لمخلوقاته أن تستمد منه وجودها أو صفاتها، لأنه لا وجود لإله غير الله.

وتماشياً مع هذا التعريف لفكرة التسامي، فإن كل شيئ بما في ذلك الإنسان قد حُدِّد بكونه آيات. الملاحظ أن لفظ 'آية' هو نفسه الذي تم استعماله للدلالة على الوحدات المشكلة لسور القرآن الكريم. فكأن الكون كله عبارة عن كتاب عظيم كتبه الله تعالى؛ والقرآن الكريم يشكل أنموذجاً ومثالاً مصغراً عنه في عالم اللغة؛ والفطرة البشرية، حاملة الأمانة، هي الأنموذج والمثال في عالم المخلوقات الحية. ولهذا التوازي بين القرآن الكريم والكون وشكل الإنسان ارتباط بعقيدة "أم الكتاب"، وهو القرآن السماوي الأسمى [أواللوح المحفوظ] الذي يشكل القرآن الكريم نسخة مختصرة منه. إن مفهوم "أم الكتاب" تكاد تكون لازمة وضرورية ص39 على اعتبار أن الإسلام - يعتبر من جهة عالَم الغيب (وهي عوالم الجن والملائكة) شرطاً أساساً للإيمان، ومن جهة أخرى على أن الله تعالى هو العليم الذي لا يخفى عليه أي شيء، في أي عالم من العوالم، ولا أي مخلوق من المخلوقات سواء أكان مرئياً أو غير مرئي؛ ذلك لأنه رب كل شيء. وذلك العِلم الذي لا يعرف النقصان ولا التغيير، هو 'الأم' والأصل الأول للكتاب

الأبدي السرمدي الذي لا يتغير، والذي نعرّفه بكونه القرآن الكريم. وعليه، فإن عقيدة "أم الكتاب" هي بشكل صارم عقيدة قويمة أصيلة orthodox ما دمنا نأخذ في الحسبان أن العلم الإلهي هو الله تعالى جل جلاله نفسه، إذ أن هذه من صفاته تعالى الجوهرية [الملازمة له].

إن الأحاديث القدسية الأربعين التي تم تقديمها في هذا الكتاب تتطابق تطابقاً كلياً مع القرآن الكريم إلى درجة يمكن اعتبارها معها بمثابة "تفسير" له: أي شرح تم القيام به لا عن طريق تحليل واستنباط المعاني الخفية في كتاب الله تعالى، بل عن طريق تجميع تلك المعاني واختصارها في جوهرها الأساس. إن الله تعالى، وهو يوحي بهذه "الأحاديث القدسية" مباشرة للنبي محمد (ص) فهو لا يعلمنا شيئاً جديداً بقدر ما يتحدَّانا بشكل مباشر لا نظير له أن نفعل ما نقوله وما ندعو إليه، وأن نكون ونحيا وفق ما نعرفه ونعلمه من العلم.

## ḤADĪTH 1

God, the Most High, said: I wonder how a person who is certain of death can be happy. I wonder how a person who is certain of [the Day of] Reckoning (*ḥisāb*) can gather wealth (*māl*). I wonder how a person who is certain of death can laugh. I wonder how a person who is certain of this world's doom (*zawāl al-dunyā*) can place his trust in it. I wonder how a person who is certain of the Hereafter (*ākhirah*) and its bounties can rest. I wonder how a person can be knowledgeable in speech yet ignorant in heart. I wonder how a person can be purified with water (*muṭṭahar*) yet unclean of heart. I wonder how a person can busy himself with the faults of people (*'uyūb al-nās*) while being unaware of his own faults. I wonder how a person who knows that God, the Most High, knows of his actions yet still disobeys. I wonder how a person who knows that he will die alone, enter the grave alone, and give accounts alone (*yuḥāsab*) can enjoy the company of people. God, the Most High, says: There is no god but God. Verily, verily, Muḥammad is My servant and My messenger.

## الحديث الأول

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: عَجِبْتُ لِمَنْ أَيْقَنَ بِالْمَوْتِ كَيْفَ يَفْرَحُ، وَعَجِبْتُ لِمَنْ أَيْقَنَ بِالْحِسَابِ كَيفَ يَجْمَعُ الْمَالَ، وَعَجِبْتُ لِمَنْ أَيْقَنَ بِالْقَبْرِ كَيفَ يَضْحَكُ، وَعَجِبْتُ لِمَنْ أَيْقَنَ بِزَوَالِ الدُّنْيَا كَيفَ يَطْمَئِنُّ إِلَيْهَا، وَعَجِبْتُ لِمَنْ أَيْقَنَ بِبَقَاءِ الآخِرَةِ وَنَعِيمِهَا كَيْفَ يَسْتَرِيحُ، وَعَجِبْتُ لِمَنْ هُوَ عَالِمٌ بَاللِّسَانِ جَاهِلٌ بِالْقَلْبِ، وَعَجِبْتُ لِمَنْ هُوَ مُطَهَّرٌ بِالمَاءِ وَغَيْرُ طَاهِرٍ بِالْقَلْبِ، وَعَجِبْتُ لِمَنِ اشْتَغَلَ بِعُيُوبِ النَّاسِ، وَهُوَ غَافِلٌ عَنْ عُيُوبِ نَفْسِهِ، وَعَجِبْتُ لِمَنْ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى مُطَّلِعٌ عَلَيْهِ كَيفَ يَعْصِيهِ. وَعَجِبْتُ لِمَنْ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ يَمُوتُ وَحْدَهُ، وَيَدْخُلُ الْقَبْرَ وَحْدَهُ، وَيُحَاسَبُ وَحْدَهُ، كَيفَ يَستَأْنِسُ النَّاسَ. وَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ حَقّاً حَقّاً، مُحَمَّدٌ عَبْدِي وَرَسُولِي.

## COMMENTARY ON ḤADĪTH 1

This *ḥadīth* can be seen as a commentary on the *ayah*: "it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts, which are within the bosoms, that grow blind" (Q. 22:46). The world, speech, the body, the faults and opinions of others, are all shown here as aspects of the veil that darkens the Heart: with death, with the doom of this world, they will all pass away. But what exactly do these several aspects of the one veil have in common?

All these are *appearances* maintained by the five senses and the human mind. When our hearts are veiled and darkened we do not see the world as the ensemble of the signs (*ayāt*) of God, but as a literal, material object in which we are encased, a closed system that embraces everything that is, one that exists in its own right. And if we still have some idea of God, we may imagine Him as if He were one of the objects contained in this world—perhaps the biggest and most powerful object, but nonetheless one whose quality is not intrinsically different from that of a star or a rock or an atom.

Likewise the veiled heart will see the body as a simple material object with no "inside" to it. It lives, it dies, but it is host to nothing beyond itself. To such a heart the *ḥadīth qudsī* "heaven and earth (mind and world) cannot contain Me, but the heart of my willing slave can contain Me" (*ḥadīth qudsī* repeated by the Ṣūfīs, probably first found in al-Ghazālī) is meaningless: the world contains God just as it contains my body; the heart contains nothing.

The veiled heart is essentially the *nafs*. Though it holds an obscure or erroneous idea of God, or may even deny His existence, nonetheless—and how ironically!—it believes itself to *be* God. One sign of this belief is that it takes its own actions as intrinsically faultless, finding fault only with the actions of others. The blind heart is blind both to itself and to the existence of the human heart in others—and human actions with no heart guiding them are necessarily full of errors and transgressions.

But what is the power of darkness that veils the heart, thus generating all the false views of the world, the body and other people? It is, to a large degree, the power of human speech. Speech is a great gift of God to the human *fiṭrah*, a gift derived

from one of the seven "mother attributes" of God Himself; but the greater the gift, the more destructive its perversion. Every one of us, and every object of the universe, is (as it were) a "word" of God, a derivative of the primal word of creation *kun!* ("be!;" Q. 2:117) spoken by God to all the things He wished to create, the word that transformed them from non-existent potentials within the embrace of His own Infinite Reality into real existing creatures.

To the degree that we recognize ourselves as words spoken by God, we will understand our own speech as derivative, as a gift to us out of God's own powers, not as a power we have the right to wield however we wish. But when the heart is veiled, we will act both as if speech were our own possession—if not our own creation—and as if everything we say to others, and to ourselves, were absolutely true, possessing all the rights of Truth itself—even if we happen to be lying, and know it. But only God is *al-Ḥaqq*, the Truth.

The Qur'ān defines this kind of self-idolatry in the *ayah* "Or were they created out of naught? Or are they the creators?" (Q. 52:35) and "They are but names which ye have named, ye and your fathers, for which God hath revealed no warrant. They follow but a guess and that which (they) themselves desire. And now the guidance from their Lord hath come unto them" (Q. 53:23).

Those who believe that they possess the power to create reality through speech—in other words, through lying—are dealt with in the *sūrah* of *The Poets*, where they are described as the ones "upon whom the satans descend" (Q. 26:221), those who "say that which they do not" (Q. 26:226).

But most of those who assume that speech is their own possession usually also take it for granted; they remain largely unconscious of their relationship to speech, which means that they are also mostly unconscious of their own thoughts, seeing that thought is largely made up of unconscious speech. By means of this speech we define reality, and then go on to see ourselves, other people and the world around us according to these unconscious definitions. God may "show them My signs on the horizons and in their own souls" (Q. 41:53), but we recognize none of these signs. If God shows us something that is

at odds with our own unconscious definitions of things, we reject it; even if He shows us some reality that these definitions allow for, we will not see it as coming from Him, but simply as part of the matter-of-fact nature of our factual, material world. The world-image maintained by our unconscious speech is necessarily a material one, because we have "created" it without recourse to the Will and Spirit of God; the same goes for our body-image. And unconscious speech certainly has a lot to do with our vision of other people's faults!

How many hours in a given day do we spend cursing under our breath the various wrong-doers who have done us dirt, without even realizing what we are doing? Ironically, however, those who feel that it is their right to judge others are often excessively attached to the opinions others have of them. Though they claim the right to wield to God's power as *al-'Adil*, the Just Judge, in reality they have no fear of Him at all, but live in fear of the judgment of other mortal creatures like themselves. Thus God punishes those who unconsciously believe that they have created the world and other people by making them the slaves of the shifting conditions of that world and the thoughtless actions and fickle opinions of those other people. But whoever accepts the Judgment of God gives no weight to the judgments of others, and whoever submits to the Mercy and Sovereignty of God has no fear of worldly conditions.

Because the hearts in our breasts are blind (cf. Q. 22:46), we live as unreal selves in an unreal world—a world that God has not created and (luckily for us!) does not choose to bless. But when we die or when this world ends—as it most certainly will end when we are in our graves—then the veil covering the heart will be removed. In the words of the prophetic *ḥadīth*, "Men are asleep, and when they die they awaken" (Ibrāhim ibn 'Alī al-Ḥusrī). If you fear the poverty that opens you to the Bounty of God, which (in the *bāṭinī* sense) is the sort of poverty that prevents you from clinging to this or that self-identity, then you will also fear death and cling to sleep. But when the body and the world it perceives are gone, when sleep has departed, what will our hearts see then? If our hearts have been blind all our lives, we will see the accumulated effects of this blindness—in other words, the Fire. This is why we are called on to "die before

you are made to die" (prophetic *ḥadīth*)—to die, and consequently to awaken, in this life. When we die before we die, then the *dunyā*, the false world we have made up out of our own conceits, dies too. And the vision of our body as a nothing but a material object, like a house or a car, dies along with it—because when the heart awakens and regains its sight, the body no longer veils that heart. And when our vision of a purely material world and a purely material body dies—when God shows us His signs on the horizons (the outer world) and within ourselves (cf. Q. 41:53)—then we will see those signs, and recognize them for what they are.

This *ḥadīth* appears to be a simple warning against heedlessness and pride, and it certainly is that. But at least two of its apparently rhetorical questions can actually be answered positively. The answer to "I wonder how a person who is certain of the Hereafter (*ākhirah*) and its bounties can rest" is: "He can rest in this very certainty (*yaqīn*), which can only be attained by those who die before they are made to die, since they have attained the *nafs al-muṭma'innah*, the self-at-peace. Without such certainty, no rest is possible in this world." And the answer to "I wonder how a person who is certain of death can be happy" is: "He who has died to himself and the world cannot help but be happy, since he is already virtually in Paradise."

## ḤADĪTH 2

God, the Most High, said: My Self witnesses to My Self that there is no god but Me alone, without partner, and that Muḥammad, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him and his Family, is My servant and My messenger (*rasūlī*). He who is not pleased with My decree (*qaḍā'ī*), not forbearing when faced with My afflictions (*balā'ī*), not grateful for My bounties (*na'mā'ī*), and not content with My gifts (*'aṭā'ī*), then let him implore (*ṭalaba*) another Lord other than Me (*siwā'ī*), and get out from under My firmament (*samā'ī*). He who wakes up sad on account of this world (*dunyā*) it is as if he wakes angry with Me (*sākhiṭān*). He who complains to another (*'ilā ghayrī*) about the calamities (*muṣībah*) which have befallen him it is as if he has complained about Me (*shakānī*). He who goes to a rich person (*ghanī*) and humiliates himself (*tawāḍa'*) before him on account of his wealth, one-third of his religion (*dīn*) leaves him. He who slaps (*laṭama*) his face in front of a corpse (*mayyit*) it is as if he has taken a spear (*ramaḥa*) and fought Me (*yuqātil*) with it. He who wails in front of a dead person's grave it is as if he has destroyed (*hadama*) My Ka'bah with his own hands. He who does not care about what he eats, I will not care from which gate (*bāb*) I will make him enter Hell (*jahannam*). He who is not attempting to improve (*yakun fī al-ziyādah*) his religion (*dīn*) is in decrease. He who is decreasing (*naqṣān*), death is better for him. He who practices (*'amala*) according to his knowledge (*'ilm*) I will add knowledge to his knowledge.

## الحديث الثاني

قالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: شَهِدَتْ نَفْسِي لِنَفْسِي، أَنْ لاَ إِلهَ إِلاَّ أَنَا وَحْدِي لاَ شَرِيكَ لِي، وَمُحَمَّدٌ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ عَبْدِي وَرَسُولِي. مَنْ لَمْ يَرْضَ بِقَضَائِي، وَلَمْ يَصْبِرْ عَلَى بَلاَئِي، وَلَمْ يَشْكُرْ عَلَيَّ نَعْمَائِي، وَلَمْ يَقْنَعْ بِعَطَائِي، فَلْيَطْلُبْ رَبّاً سِوَائِي، وَلْيَخْرُجْ مِنْ تَحْتِ سَمَائِي. وَمَنْ أَصْبَحَ حَزِيناً عَلَى الدُّنْيَا، فَكَأَنَّمَا أَصْبَحَ سَاخِطاً عَلَيَّ. وَمَنِ اشْتَكَى مُصِيبَةً نَزَلَتْ بِهِ إِلَى غَيْرِي، فَقَدْ شَكَانِي. وَ مَنْ دَخَلَ عَلَى غَنِيٍّ فَتَوَاضَعَ لَهُ مِنْ أَجْلِ غِنَائِهِ، ذَهَبَ ثُلُثُ دِينِه. وَمَنْ لَطَمَ وَجْهَهُ عَلَى مَيِّتٍ، فَكَأَنَّمَا أَخَذَ رُمْحاً يُقَاتِلُنِي بِه. وَمَنْ كَسَرَ عُوداً عَلَى قَبْرِ مَيِّتٍ، فَكَأَنَّمَا هَدَم كَعْبَتِي بِيَدِه. وَمَنْ لَمْ يُبَالِ مِنْ أَيْنَ يَأكُلُ، لَمْ أُبَالِ بِهِ مِنْ أَيِّ بَابٍ أُدْخِلُهُ فِي جَهَنَّم. وَمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِي الزِّيَادَةِ فِي دِينِهِ، فَهُوَ فِي النُّقْصَانِ. وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي النُّقْصَانِ، فَالْمَوْتُ خَيْرٌ لَهُ. وَمَنْ عَمِلَ بِمَا عَلِمَ، زِدْتُهُ عِلْماً إِلَى عِلْمِه.

God is the only One who possesses complete Self-Knowledge, because He is the only real Self. His Self-Knowledge is Knowledge of His intrinsic Being, and is identical to that Being, without the even the rumor of a hint of a shadow of any duality or division or separation. And just as the epitome of that Knowledge in the mode of universal Creation is Sayyidunā Adam, peace and blessings be upon him, so the epitome of that Self-Knowledge in the mode of universal Mercy and Compassion is Sayyidunā Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Muḥammad is the servant and messenger of God because he is perfectly submissive to every one of the Names of God, both when the Lordship of a particular Name rises upon him according to God's command, and also in his permanent nature as the human balance and synthesis of all the Names according to God's Essence. Muḥammad is the revelation of the meaning of the *ayah*: "Lo! We offered the Trust unto the heavens and the earth and the hills, but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it. And man assumed it" (Q.33:72). And as for man, the human race, when he fails to recognize the human norm (*al-fiṭrah*) and God's Trust (*al-amānah*) in either the Prophet or himself, "Lo! He hath proved a tryant and a fool" (Q. 33:72).

When calamity befalls us we are tempted to blame our enemies, or the fate imposed upon us by the stars, or the chance imposed upon us by the dice. When good luck appears we rush to congratulate ourselves, and to fawn upon our patrons. We implore "other lords." But if we think that good and bad fortune arise from secondary causes—from fate, or chance, or other people's actions—then we will not be able to be patient in the face of misfortune, nor grateful for the gift of good fortune, nor content with *any* fortune. If we are still trying to escape fate, or dominate chance, or plot how we might deceive, threaten or cajole the unreliable and impermanent realm of secondary causes—including other people, as well as our own fears and desires, which are just as foreign to the Heart as the unpredictable actions of outside flatterers and enemies—then we will not be able to discern the *qiblah* from which all fortune ultimately arrives, the *qiblah* of God, which is the *qiblah* of

Peace. Those who see good or bad fortune as coming into their lives from some other point of the compass can neither accept bad fortune—because it is meaningless and should have been different—nor good fortune, because it is never enough—nor indifferent fortune—since they will always do their best to define it as good fortune by their unreasonable expectations or as bad fortune by their obsessive complaints. But those who see all fortune as arriving from the *qiblah* of God are immediately silenced by His Decree, by the intrinsic meaning of it. This is *al-salām al-akbar*, the Great Peace.

We are used to seeing God as our refuge from the *dunyā*, and He certainly is that. But He is also the Essence of the *dunyā*; to take refuge from Him in Him is to recognize that there is no place where He is not. We cannot escape from Him any more than we can get out from under His sky and find another sky to shelter us. If we really understood that His Mercy has precedence over His Wrath (cf. Bukhārī), we would not search for a better decree from Him to compensate for the decree we have not been able to accept. The Mercy of God is not a "better deal" than the deal offered us by the *dunyā*; the Mercy of God is the recognition that He is *al-Salām*, the Flawless, that whatever comes into our lives is sent by Him, and that whatever He sends us is good. The *dunyā* is nothing other than the failure—both individual and collective—to recognize this truth.

To complain to someone else about one's misfortunes is either to alienate them or to obligate them, to attempt to invoke from them either Wrath or Mercy. But Wrath and Mercy belong only to God. And to fawn upon a rich man is to worship an idol who has no power either to help or to hurt, except that given to him by the All-Powerful. Whoever takes refuge from God in someone or something else is an idolater; whoever takes refuge from God in God is a *muslim*. The idolater relies upon, or struggles against, nothing but dreams and shadows; he lives in a world of ever-shifting threats and promises. When misfortune comes he makes it worse by cursing it; when generosity arrives he pollutes it by greedily grabbing after what is offered. Because his Heart is veiled to the ultimate Source of fortune he is without patience and without gratitude. In the words of the *ḥadīth qudsī*: "Why do they complain to Me of the fluctuations of fortune

brought about by Time? I *am* Time" (Bukhārī and Muslim).

Excessive mourning demonstrates that the vision of the *ākhirah*, or even the simple faith in it, is closed to the mourner. The door stands open, but he sees the line of the threshold as an impenetrable barrier because his eyes are fixed upon the ground. The one who mourns the loss of a loved one beyond proper measure is struggling to avoid the death that God has commanded for him. Instead of knowing God as *al-Ḥayy*, the Living, he sees God as Death, and fights against Him. But the one who dies before he dies, dies with every breath, is finished with loss and with mourning.

*Ḥarām* nourishment is not only food that is dishonestly gained or meat that is improperly slaughtered; much more fundamentally, it is the result of the attention we pay to idols—that is, to unrealities—and to the many fantasies and dreams and impressions of these idols that clutter the Heart, just as indigestible food clogs the stomach.

Religion can never be a possession. Salvation cannot be reduced to membership in a group. If the veils are not progressively removed from the Heart, unveiling the Face of God, they multiply and obscure Him. For one whose Heart is veiled by his own thick and lifeless self, the death of that self is his only cure.

Knowledge that is realized through action, in either the *ẓāhir* or the *bāṭin*, can never be lost. True Knowledge *is* action—and to place the attention of the Heart upon God, to the exclusion of all else, is the most complete action possible. In true Knowledge, the word arises directly from the act; in false, delusory knowledge, the word pretends to *be* the act, and so aborts it. Those who rely upon words to retain and increase their Knowledge are the ones who "say that which they do not" (Q. 26:226), their words are empty of substance. They learn only what they have led themselves to expect because they are not "as good as their word." But those who love to act will learn what really comes of Knowledge, beyond all expectation.

## ḤADĪTH 3

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! He who is content (*qana'*) is independent (*istaghna*). He who is pleased with little from this world trusts in God, the All-Mighty and Most High. O son of Adam! He who abandons envy (*al-ḥasad*) finds rest. He who avoids what is forbidden (*ḥaram*) completes his religion (*dīn*). He who abandons (*taraka*) backbiting (*al-ghībah*) will be beloved in the hearts (*qulūb*) [of the people]. He who retreats from (*a'tazala*) the people is safe (*salima*) from them. He who talks little is wise. He who is pleased with little sustenance (*rizq*) from God, God is pleased with his few deeds (*'amal*). O son of Adam! You do not practice (*ta'malu*) according to your knowledge. Then how could you seek knowledge of what you do not know? O son of Adam! You spend all your years (*'amr*) seeking this world (*dunyā*) when will you (have time to) seek the Hereafter (*ākhirah*)?

## الحديث الثالث

قالَ اللّهُ تَعَالَى: يَابْنَ آدَمَ مَنْ قَنَع استَغْنَى، وَمَنْ رَضِيَ بِالْقَلِيل مِنَ الدُّنْيَا فَقَدْ وَثَقَ بِاللّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ. يَابْنَ آدَمَ مَنْ تَرَكَ الْحَسَدَ استَرَاحَ، وَمَنِ اجْتَنَبَ الْحَرَامَ خلُصَ دِينُهُ. وَمَنْ تَرَكَ الغِيبَةَ ظَهَرَتْ مَحَبَّتُهُ في القُلُوبِ. وَمَنِ أعتَزَلَ عَنِ النَّاسِ سَلِمَ مِنْهُمْ. وَمَنْ قَلَّ كَلامُهُ كَمُل عَقْلُهُ. وَمَنْ رَضِيَ مِنَ اللّهِ بِالْقَلِيلِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ، رَضِيَ اللّهُ عَنْهُ بِالْقَلِيلِ مِنَ الْعَمَلِ. يَابْنَ آدَمَ أَنْتَ بِمَا تَعْلَمُ، لا تَعْمَلُ، فكَيْفَ تَطْلُبُ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُ؟ يَابْنَ آدَمَ أَفْنَيتَ عُمرَكَ في طَلَبِ الدُّنْيَا، فَمَتَى تَطْلُبُ الآخِرَةَ؟

## COMMENTARY ON ḤADĪTH 3

This *ḥadīth* promises independence to those who are content with God. This is rather mysterious, however—because who can be independent of God? Those who are content with the *dunyā* may think they are independent of Him, but their day must come, either the day of calamity or the day of their death, when they find out just how wrong they were. And those who are content with God are content with their dependency on Him. What, then, is this contentment that takes us beyond all dependency? To satisfy God and be satisfied with Him (cf. Q. 89:28) is to be satisfied with one's own non-existence; only that which does not exist is dependent upon nothing. And a thing that does not exist has no complaints.

He who is pleased with little from this world sees each particle of sustenance as coming directly from the hand of God, whose Presence blots out all weights and measures.

To be jealous is to see someone else as possessing what we should rightfully possess; the jealous person lives in a world of thieves, all of whom are rich, while the jealous one alone is poor. How then can he rest? But the one who knows that he is intrinsically poor, not just accidentally so, and that only God is the Rich (cf. Q. 47:38), no longer compares himself with others.

He who seeks what is forbidden believes that riches exist in some mythic land that lies outside of God's generosity; he who renounces what is forbidden knows that God is the most generous of the generous, and consequently that, in renouncing he has renounced no real thing whatsoever.

The people love the one who has renounced backbiting not simply because he does nothing to irritate them, but because the one who has no complaints, because he sees all things as acts and signs of God, sheds gladness wherever he goes.

To distance oneself from people is not to become aloof and misanthropic; rather it is to renounce expectations and demands regarding them, to give up identification with them, to stop imprisoning them within yourself and simultaneously breaking into their houses to see what you can find. This is what is meant by "solitude in company." The one who has distanced himself from people occupies his own house, his own land. Since he has renounced raiding the lands of others, his stronghold is always

well-garrisoned; therefore he is safe.

To talk too much is unwise due to four dangers: first, that the speaker's words might outstrip his knowledge and so go over into into lying and hypocrisy; secondly, that his words might outstrip his listeners' capacity to understand and so become the cause of confusion and delirium; thirdly, that talk might feed the speaker's desire to live in a self-contrived world of meaning, not in a world created by God and composed of His signs; and fourthly, that the one who is always talking, due either to unconcsious obsession or to the deliberate pursuit of self-distraction, may lose the ability to listen for God's words addressed to him, both on the horizons and in his own soul (cf. Q. 41:53). Speech is limited only to what is being said at a particular time, but silence is without limit, which is why it possesses the capacity to become with the speech of God.

To see one's smallest possession as a gift of God is to see it as a great treasure.

To accept each moment as a gift of God is to submit to each moment as His command.

To seek knowledge but not practice it is to turn it into a possession through the use of memory, to clutter one's house with it. But the day must come when the house of the knowledge-miser is so crammed-full of treasure that it has no space left for even a single additional coin; that is when the whole hoard of acquired and remembered knowledge will suddenly turn to ashes.

The hereafter arrives in each instant, when what was just now the whole present reality suddenly dies, and becomes the past forever. To seek the *dunyā* is to run after the past—and the past is a lot faster than you are; in the swiftness of its retreat, it is always one step ahead of you. But to seek the hereafter is to stop, take a breath, open your eyes, and watch the future endlessly arriving, fresh from the hand of God, and laying itself at your feet.

## ḤADĪTH 4

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! He who starts his day greedy (*ḥariṣān*) for this world adds to his distance far from God. And for the Hereafter he has added exertion. God, the Most High, has added grief (*hummān*) in his heart that will never end. His poverty will never be changed into wealth and his wishes will never be fulfilled. O son of Adam! Every day your years (*'amr*) are shortened yet you do not understand. Every day I give you sustenance from Me. O son of Adam! There is not a new day but in which I give you new sustenance (*rizq*) from Me and there is not a single night that passes but in which My angels give me accounts of your unseemly deeds (*'amal qabīḥ*). You eat of My sustenance (*rizq*) yet you disobey Me. [Yet when] you call Me, I [still] answer you. My good (*khayr*) descends upon you. Your evil (*sharr*) rises up to Me. How good a Master (*mawlā*) I am and how bad a servant (*'abd*) you are! I give you whatever you ask Me [and] yet you still go on sinning. I hide these sins, one after another, one unseemly deed (*qabīḥ*) after another. I am ashamed of you yet you are not ashamed before Me? You forget Me yet remember others. You fear people yet feel secure from My wrath.

## الحديث الرابع

قَالَ اللّهُ تَعَالَى: يَابْنَ آدَمَ مَنْ أَصْبَحَ حَرِيصاً عَلَى الدُنْيا، لَمْ يَزِدْ مِنَ اللّهِ إلاَّ بُعْداً، وَفِي الآخِرَةِ إلاَّ جُهْداً. وَأَلْزَمَ اللّهُ تَعَالَى قَلْبَهُ هَمّاً لاَ يَنْقَطِعُ أَبَداً، وَفَقْراً لاَ يَنَالُ غِنَاهُ أَبَداً، وَأَمَلاً لاَ يَنَالُ مُنَاهُ أَبَداً. يَابْنَ آدَمَ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ يَنْقُصُ مِنْ عُمْرِكَ وَأَنْتَ لاَ تَدْرِي، وَيَأتِي كُلَّ يَوْمٍ رِزْقُكَ مِنْ عِنْدِي. يَابْنَ آدَمَ مَا مِنْ يَوْمٍ جَدِيدٍ، إلاَّ وَيَأْتِيكَ مِنْ عِنْدِي رِزْقٌ جَدِيدٌ، وَمَا مِنْ لَيْلَةٍ، إلاَّ وَيَأْتِينِي مَلاَئِكَتِي مِنْ عِنْدِكَ بِعَمَلٍ قَبِيحٍ. تَأكُلُ رِزْقِي وَتَعْصِينِي، وَأَنْتَ تَدْعُونِي فَأَسْتَجِيبُ لَكَ. خَيْرِي إلَيْكَ نَازِلٌ، وَشَرُّكَ إلَيَّ صَاعِدٌ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَى أَنَا وَبِئْسَ الْعَبْدُ أَنْتَ. تَسْألُنِي فَأُعْطِيكَ، وَأَسْتُرُ إلَيْكَ سُوءاً بَعْدَ سُوءٍ، وَقَبِيحاً بَعْدَ قَبِيحٍ. أَنَا أَسْتَحْيِ○ي مِنْكَ، وَأَنْتَ لاَ تَسْتَحْيِي مِنِّي. وَتَنْسَانِي وَتَذْكُرُ غَيْرِي، وَتَخَافُ النَّاسَ وَتَأمَنُ غَضَبِي.

Greed is a form of self-will, and self-will hampers action. Those whose Hearts are filled with self-will will carry it into the next life. How can they receive the food and drink of the Garden if they are still grasping after things in the *ākhirah*? In this world, self-will is impatience and ruthlessness and irritation and lack of peace; in the next world it is the Fire.

Self-will cannot harvest the fruits of this world because it cannot interact creatively with the potentials inherent in real situations; all it can do is try to blindly impose itself. Creative action requires receptivity as well as imagination, rest as well as labor. If effort is not combined with insight it will come to nothing, it will do more harm than good. If your intent is to dig an irrigation ditch you must dig it in your field, not in the floor of your home. Nor can self-will feast upon the fruits of the next world because that is the world where the veil of secondary causes is removed, where all is seen as arriving from the hand of God, and self-will can see and interact with nothing but secondary causes. In running after them it ends by appropriating and devouring them, until the day comes when it believes itself alone to be the sole Cause—but as soon as it claims total power it enters a state of total helplessness.

Every gift we receive from God dissolves a section of our earthly time and replaces it with a facet of His eternity. In every moment He reveals a different face to us, calling on us for a different response; if we act on the basis of habits or preconceived ideas, instead of immediate submission to His Command, we will be unable to make this response; consequently we will live our lives in a state of disobedience.

"It is He who taketh your souls at night, and knoweth what you have merited in the day" [Q. 6:60]. In the day God sends forth His Spirit to give us life and guidance, and we breathe it in; in the night we breathe back our response to His gift, the consequences of our thoughts and actions, and He draws them back into Himself. Thus the day and night of the Spirit happen with every breath. What He breathes into us is perfect; what we give back to him is inevitably flawed—because how could the creature equal the Creator? Those who accept sustenance and

command from God, knowing and acknowledging that the Source of these things is in Him, are given in return the ability to release to Him their disobedience and imperfection, as well as the power to accept His purification, in the knowledge that no other purification is possible for them—least of all any struggle for perfection based upon their own efforts.

If we struggle to remember God on the basis of self-will, we will forget Him; "They forgot Him, so He caused them to forget themselves" (Q. 59:19). But if we realize that He never stops remembering us, and that His remembrance is perfect, while ours is inevitably flawed and filled with distractions—if we understand that "It is We who have sent down the Remembrance" (Q. 15.9)—then His remembrance of us will lend its own depth and constancy to our remembrance of Him. Who but God can remember God? Who but God can know God? Who but God can speak the Name of God?

To sing His glories is certainly praiseworthy—but it is not enough. To rest content with what comes to us from Him, be it little or much—that is enough.

## ḤADĪTH 5

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Do not be like the one who asks repentance (*tawbah*), [without doing anything to obtain it], hoping for a long life; who hopes for the Hereafter (*ākhirah*) without [doing] good deeds (*'amal*); who speaks like the ascetics (*zāhidīn*) yet acts like the hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*); and, if given, he is never satisfied, and if denied, he is not patient; who promotes the good (*amr bi al-khayr*) yet does not do it himself; who prohibits evil (*naha 'an al-sharr*) yet does not prohibit himself from doing so; who loves the righteous (*ṣāliḥīn*) yet he is not one of them; who hates (*yubghiḍu*) hypocrites yet he is one of them. O son of Adam! With every new day the earth addresses (*tukhāṭibuka*) you and says: "O son of Adam! You walk upon Me yet you will be within my bowels (*baṭnī*). You sin upon my surface (*ẓahrī*) yet you will be tortured within my bowels (*baṭnī*). O son of Adam! I am the house of loneliness (*waḥdah*). I am the house of dreariness (*waḥshah*). I am the house of darkness (*ẓulmah*). I am the house of scorpions and snakes (*ḥayyāt*)! And I am the house of shame (*ḥawwānī*)! [So] dwell upon me, (work for my welfare and prosperity), and do not destroy me.

## الحديث الخامس

قال اللَّهُ تعَالَى: يَابْنَ آدَمَ لاَ تَكُنْ مِمَّنْ يَطْلُبُ التَّوْبَةَ بِطُولِ الأَمَلِ، وَيَرْجُو الآخِرَةَ بِغَيْرِ عَمَلٍ، يَقُولُ قَوْلَ الزَّاهِدِينَ، وَيَعْمَلُ عَمَلَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ، إِنْ أُعْطِىَ لاَ يَقْنَعُ، وَإِنْ مُنِعَ لاَ يَصْبِرُ. يَأْمُرُ بِالْخَيْرِ وَلاَ يَفْعَلُهُ، وَيَنْهَى عَنِ الشَّرِّ وَلاَ يَنْتَهِى عَنْهُ. وَيُحِبُّ الصَّالِحِينَ وَلَيْسَ مِنْهُمْ، وَيبْغُضُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ. يَابْنَ آدَمَ مَا مِنْ يَوْمٍ جَدِيدٍ إِلاَّ وَالأَرْضُ تُخَاطِبُكَ وَتَقُولُ: يَابْنَ آدَمَ تَمْشِي عَلى ظَهْرِي، وَمَصِيرُكَ فِي بَطْنِي، وَتُذْنِب عَلَى ظَهْرِي، وَتُعَذَّبُ فِي بَطْنِي. يَابْنَ آدَمَ أَنَا بَيْتُ الوَحْدَةِ، وَأنَا بَيْتُ الْوَحْشَةِ، وَأَنَا بَيْتُ الظُّلْمَةِ، وَأنَا بَيْتُ العَقَارِبِ وَالْحَيَّاتِ، وَأَنَا بَيْتُ الهَوانِ، فَاعْمُرنِي وَ لاَ تَخْرُبْنِي.

The one who dreams of repentance instead of actually repenting remains a transgressor. The one who longs to repent for all his future transgressions instead of truly repenting for his present one is tryong to build a bridge with cracked stones and defective mortar. The one who repents by worshipping his desire for God as a god instead of God Himself has not repented; whichever way he turns, he sees only his own face.

The one who hopes for the Hereafter without doing good deeds is the one who presumes upon his pre-eternal union with God before "*Kun!*" was spoken (Q. 2:117), before "Am I not your Lord?" was answered by "Yea!" (Q. 7:172). He expects that the truth that God is the Essence of all things, which in their own essence are nothing, will act as a substitute for, and do the work of, the command to *islām* that God has laid upon him. He is like someone who, confronted by his creditors when his debt comes due, tells them that all the riches of the universe are his and theirs also, so why are they bothering him? He is like someone who expects to pay off his debts with moonlight because it looks like silver.

The one who speaks like an ascetic while acting like a hypocrite has starved himself of love while stuffing himself with passion. The one who receives the generosity of God but still demands that others satisfy their debts to him to the last penny has not received, nor will he ever be satisfied; he has confused receiving with grabbing, mistaken God for the *dunyā*. How can you be a recipient of generosity if you are not generous? How can you give if you aren't willing to receive? And what happens when everything is being demanded of you, and everything is also being given to you, at exactly the same time—and then you see that the gift and the demand are precisely the same thing?

Those who promote good with their tongues without performing it with their hands are like criminals passing counterfeit money; they "say that which they do not" (Q. 26:226). They are "the poets" (Q. 26:224) who think that lies have the power to establish truth, forgetting that the first and the last Word, and the only Speaker of it, is *God*—who is *al-Ḥaqq*, the Truth. Those who prohibit evil to others without prohibiting it to themselves are tyrants like the Pharaoh was—whether petty

or magnificent, whether lions or lice. Their generosity to others is a lie; their generosity to themselves is non-existent. Those who love the righteous but are not righteous themselves are sycophants who enslave their masters; their loyalty is like the loyalty of a child to the candy in the cupboard. And the one who hates hypocrites while being a hypocrite himself is like someone who reveals his credit card numbers to everyone he meets, while he himself has forgotten it.

The earth, unless we recognize her as the ensemble of the Signs of God, is the *nafs al-ammara bi al-su'*, the soul commanding to evil (cf. Q. 12:53). She is the house of loneliness because she seals the one who obeys her commands into himself like a prison. She is the house of beasts because she has collected within herself all of the passions. She is the house of oppression because she orders her servants to oppress themselves and wrong themselves (cf. Q. 2:57). She is the house of scorpions and snakes because she is filled with the anger of frustrated life, life turned against itself because it will not acknowledge that God is *al-Ḥayy*, the Source of Life and the Essence of it. And she is the house of shame, the sum of all temptations, because she commands her slaves to seek the Knowledge of God without submission to the Will of God. As the house of all these things she is the first principle of the *dunyā*. But for those who seek God's Will and submit to it, who can perform good deeds because they know that only God is the Doer—"It was not you who threw when you threw, but God threw" (Q. 9:17)—she is no longer the soul commanding to evil, but the *nafs al-muṭma'innah*, the soul at peace, satisfied with Her Lord and also satisfying to Him (cf. Q. 89:28). When we walk only on the outer surface of the *nafs*, and of the *dunyā* which is her reflection, then she is the house of shame indeed; when we die before we are made to die, when we enter the inner secret of the *nafs* through the door of the tomb, then she is the house of all good.

## ḤADĪTH 6

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! I did not create you so as to lift Myself out of poverty through you, to seek companionship through you after being lonely, to seek your help on matter in which I was deficient, for the sake of a benefit or for warding off harm. Rather I created you so you can worship Me abundantly, thank Me a lot, and praise Me day and night. Were the first of you and the last of you, those of you who are living and those of you who are dead, your youngsters and your elders, your masters and your slaves, the human among you and the jinn among you, to join hand in hand, in order to obey Me, you would not be adding an atom to My kingdom. Were the first of you and the last of you, those of you who are living and those of you who are dead, your youngsters and your elders, your masters and your slaves, the human among you and the jinn among you, to join hand in hand, in order to disobey Me, you would not reduce an atom in My kingdom. The one who struggles (*jahada*) is struggling for his own soul. "Indeed, God is self sufficient above any need of the worlds" [3:97].

## الحديث السادس

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَابْنَ آدَمَ مَا خَلَقْتُكُمْ لأَسْتَكْثِرَ بِكُمْ مِن قِلَّةٍ، وَلاَ لأَسْتَأْنِسَ بِكُمْ مِنْ وَحْشَةٍ، وَلاَ لأَسْتَعِينَ بِكُمْ عَلَى أَمْرٍ عَجَزْتُ عَنْهُ، وَلاَ لأَجْلِ مَنْفَعَةٍ وَلاَ لِدَفْعِ مَضَرَّةٍ، بَلْ خَلَقْتُكُمْ لِتَعْبُدُونِي طَوِيلاً وَتَشْكُرُونِي كَثِيراً، وَتُسَبِّحُونِي بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلاً. وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَوَّلَكُم وَآخِرَكُمْ، وَحَيَّكُمْ وَمَيِّتَكُمْ، وَصَغِيرَكُمْ وَكَبِيرَكُم، وَحُرَّكُمْ وَعَبْدَكُمْ، وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ، اِجْتَمَعْتُمْ عَلَى طَاعَتِي، لَمَا زَادَ ذَلِكَ فِي مُلْكِي مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ. وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَوَّلَكُمْ وَآخِرَكُمْ، وَحَيَّكُمْ وَمَيِّتَكُمْ، وَصَغِيرَكُمْ وَكَبِيرَكُمْ، وَحُرَّكُمْ وَعَبْدَكُمْ، وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمَ، اِجْتَمَعْتُمْ عَلَى مَعْصِيَتِي، مَا نَقَصَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ مُلْكِي مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ. وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ؛ "إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ العَالَمِينَ".

When we suffer—and what life is without suffering?—it is hard for us to realize that existence itself is a mercy. Suffering, ignorance, hatefulness and despair tempt us to non-existence because they arise from our own intrinsic non-existence apart from God—whereas devotion, worship, good deeds and knowledge of God move us toward the Existence we were created to manifest. God has no needs, yet He fulfills the longing of things, all the non-existent possibilities, to awaken from the night of non-existence into the day of existence so they can know, love and serve Him. It is we who are poor, lonely, weak and in need of protection, not Him. We are suspended between existence and non-existence, whereas God is *al-Qayyūm*, the Sole Self-Existent Reality. He has no need for our worship, gratitude and praise, but we are greatly in need of the opportunity to worship, thank and praise Him, because these are the things that let us receive the gift of existence He offers us.

Some people think that it is possible to effectively rebel against God, to do him some kind of damage; they are like that king who ordered the ocean to be punished with a whip because it sank his ships. Other people, even more foolish, think that God might be in need of their help, perhaps because He is far away in heaven and so presumably cannot function without earthly agents. But God is the Light and the Power of both the heavens and the earth (cf. Q. 24:35). A human ruler cannot rule without servants, but the power of the servants of God *is* God. When we do good we benefit only ourselves; when we do wrong we wrong only ourselves (cf. Q. 2:57). Our struggle in the way of God is not the struggle to help Him enforce His Will, or the struggle to increase our existence by our own efforts; it is the struggle to receive what God freely offers us, and consequently also the war against the greatest of all temptations: the temptation to non-existence:

Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of humankind,
The King of humankind,
The God of humankind,
From the evil of the sneaking whisperer,
Who whispereth in the hearts of humankind,

Of the jinn and of humankind.
(Q. 114)

## ḤADĪTH 7

God, the Most High, said: O slaves (*'abīd*) of dinars and dirhams [dollars and cents]! I did not create dinars or dirhams but for you to eat of My sustenance (*rizqī*), dress with it, and give alms (*tunfiqūn*) in My way (*sabīl*). You have taken My book and placed it under your feet. And you have taken this world (*dunyā*) and placed it over your head. You have raised your homes (*buyūt*) but you have lowered mine. You have made your homes merry and made Mine sad and desolate. [Thus], you are not good (*abrār*) free servants (*abīd*). O slaves (*'abīd*) of the world (*dunyā*)! You are like the graves (*qubūr*) that are plastered (*mujaṣṣsasah*), seem beautiful on the outside, and yet are ugly (*qabīḥan*) on the inside. O son of Adam! Just as a lamp (*miṣbāḥ*) on top of a house does not help [dissipate] the darkness (*ẓulmah*) inside, in the same way, your good words with evil deeds (*af'ālikum al-radiyyah*) do not help. O son of Adam! Be honest in your deeds (*'amal*) and do not ask of Me for I will give you more than what the askers (*sā'ilūn*) ask.

## الحديث ا لسابع

قالَ اللّهُ تَعالَى: يَا عَبِيدَ الدَّنَانِيرِ وَالدَّرَاهِمِ، إِنّي مَا خَلَقْتُ لَكُمْ الدَّرَاهِمَ وَالدَّنَانِيرَ إلاّ لِتَأكُلوا بِهَا رِزْقِي، وَتَلْبَسُوا بِهَا ثِيَابِي، وَتُنفِقُوا بِهَا فِي سَبِيلِي، فَأَخَذْتُمْ كِتَابِي فَجَعَلْتُمُوهُ تَحْتَ أَقْدَامِكُمْ، وَأَخَذْتُمْ الدُّنْيَا فَجَعَلْتُمُوهَا فَوْقَ رُؤُوسِكُمْ، وَرَفَعْتُمْ بُيُوتَكُمْ وَخَفَضْتُمْ بُيُوتِي، وَآنَستُمْ بُيُوتَكُمْ وَأَوْحَشْتُمْ بُيُوتِي، فَلاَ أَنْتُمْ عَبِيدٌ أَحرَارٌ أَبْرَارٌ. يَا عَبِيدَ الدُّنْيَا، إِنَّما مَثَلُكُمْ كَالقُبُورِ الْمُجَصَّصَةِ، يُرَى ظَاهِرُهَا مَلِيحاً وَبَاطِنُهَا قَبِيحاً. يَابْنَ آدَمَ كَما لاَ يُغْنِي الْمِصبَاحُ فَوقَ الْبَيْتِ عَنِ الظُّلْمَةِ الدَّاخِلَةِ عَلَيْهِ، كَذلِكَ لاَ يُغْنِي كَلاَمُكُمْ الطَّيِّبُ مَعَ أَفْعَالِكُمُ الرَّدِيَّةِ. يَابْنَ آدَمَ أَخْلِصْ عَمَلَكَ وَلاَ تَسْأَلْنِي، فَإِنِّي أُعْطِيكَ أَكْثَرَ مِمَّا يَطْلُبُ السَّائِلُونَ.

## COMMENTARY ON ḤADĪTH 7

The purpose of money is to provide its possessor with the necessities of life. If deeds are judged by their intentions, so is money; it has no value in itself, but is valued only according to its use. Whatever remains over and above what necessity requires of us should be wisely invested in the fund of the *ākhirah*; shares in this fund may be purchased through generosity to the needy. Those who tread on the Qur'ān make the world their master, not God; those who lift the world above themselves and worship it will be forced to carry it until it crushes them. The world always gives less than it promises and always takes back whatever it gives, but God not only gives more than you can hold, but more than you can *be*. And if he takes away your goods, your family, or your life, it is only so He can give you Himself, where your true good, your real family and your original life rest eternal in Him—in pavilions, in "gardens beneath which rivers flow" (Q. 2:25 et. al.)—safe forever.

Those who exalt the house that protects their bodies and their possessions thereby debase the house of God, which is the Heart. They are at home in the noise and hurry of the world because they trust it to drown out God's words, but they are lonely in the Heart where His words may be distinctly heard, since they do not recognize them. And if they do not recognize them, because the one now exposed to them has never taken any pains to learn their language, they will beat on the house of Heart like hailstones until the Heart collapses, driving that one out farther and farther into the world, until he is lost in crowds and refugee camps and armies, where solitude is destroyed and loneliness multiplies.

The followers of the world are neither free nor are they good slaves of God, because everyone who is not a slave to Him is a slave to his own *nafs*, while everyone who is a willing slave to Him is thereby free. The *nafs* commands her slave to evil, but the free man finds his good and takes it—and the good held in store for us by God is something no eye has seen, nor any ear heard rumor of, nor any heart suspected the existence of (cf. the *ḥadīth qudsī* transmitted on the authority of Abū Ḥurayrah).

It does no good to appear beautiful outwardly if, like the world, you are dead inside; nor will you be able to do any good for others in that condition because the dead are hungry for the living. But the day will come, to both the world and to those whose Hearts are dead, when that inner ugliness will be revealed for all to see: this is the chief sign of the arrival of the Hour. Only those will be secure on that day whose intelligence no longer takes the world for fuel but instead receives its oil and illumination directly from the Heart. Much corruption will be revealed when the lamp descends into the Heart, but that ugliness will not remain there for long, any more than a shadow can remain in a presence of a light that shines in all directions and penetrates everything it touches: "light upon light" (Q. 24:35). That light will purify our deeds by revealing God as the only Doer (cf. Q. 76:30)—and if He is the Doer, then how can we use our deeds to try and barter with Him? In any case, if we descend to petty haggling, if we are always looking for a better deal, we will end by asking for way too little. We think we want a house, a car, a good job, a faithful spouse, fame and power—dolls and candy—but He desires to give us Himself. When the Best Deal comes along, only the fool holds out for something better.

## ḤADĪTH 8

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! I did not create you in vain. I did not leave you alone to yourself, free. I am not heedless of your deeds. Indeed you will not get what I possess but with patience (*ṣabr*) with what you dislike (*takrahūn*) in order to seek My satisfaction. Patience (*al-ṣabr*) in My obedience is easier for you than patience in the Fire [of Hell] (*al-nār*). Punishment in this world (*dunyā*) is easier for you than punishment in the Hereafter (*akhirah*). O son of Adam! All of you are lost (*ṣālun*) except the ones I have guided. All of you are sick (*marīḍ*) except the ones I have cured (*shafaytuhu*). All of you are poor (*faqīr*) except the ones I have enriched. All of you are perishable except the ones I save. All of you are sinful except the ones I make infallible. So seek pardon (*tawbah*) from Me so that I can show you compassion (*arḥamkum*). Do no hide your intimate secrets from the One who knows all your secrets.

## الحديث الثامن

قَالَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَى: يَابْنَ آدَمَ إِنِّي لَمْ أَخْلُقْكُمْ عَبَثاً، وَلاَ جَعَلْتُكُمْ سُدَىً، وَلاَ أَنَا بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ. وَإِنَّكُمْ لَنْ تَنَالُوا مَا عِنْدِي، إلاَّ بِالصَّبْرِ عَلى مَا تَكْرَهُونَ فِي طَلَبِ رِضَائِي. وَالصَّبْرُ عَلى طَاعَتِي أَيسَرُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الصَّبْرِ عَلى حَرِّ النَّار. وَعَذَابُ الدُّنْيَا أَيْسَرُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ الآخِرَةِ. يَابْنَ آدَمَ كُلُّكُمْ ضَالٌّ إلاَّ مَنْ هَدَيْتُهُ، وَ كُلُّكُمْ مَرِيضٌ إلاَّ مَنْ شَفَيْتُهُ، وَكُلُّكُمْ فَقِيرٌ إلاَّ مَنْ أَغْنَيْتُهُ، وَكُلُّكُمْ هَالِكٌ إلاَّ مَنْ أَنْجَيْتُهُ، وَكُلُّكُمْ مُسِيءٌ إلاَّ مَنْ عَصَمْتُهُ، فَتُوبُوا إِلَيَّ أَرْحَمْكُمْ، وَلاَ تَهْتِكُوا أَسْتَارَكُمْ، عِنْدَ مَنْ لاَ يَخْفَى عَلَيْهِ أَسْرَارُكُم.

God did not create humanity in sport; "Not for (idle) sport did We create the heavens and the earth and all that is between!" (Q. 21:16). He created us with the Truth—*al-Ḥaqq* (cf. Q. 30:8)—which is one of the Names of His Essence (*al-Dhāt*). If we are from the Truth, and He *is* the Truth, then He knows the Truth about us, in every aspect, at all times, and on all levels. And if the Truth is our essence then we can never be independent of It, except through *fanā'*, annihilation; to attempt to live without it is to try not to be ourselves, to attempt to reverse and negate God's creation of us; but this is impossible.

What God possesses is Himself and nothing else, because there *is* nothing else. By this single act of possession He is "Lord of the Worlds....Owner of the Day of Judgment" (Q. 1:1&3). The *nafs*, on the other hand, likes anything that distracts it from the Presence of God; this is why it does its best to turn all actions into distractions, and all distractions into addictions. To consciously remain in the Presence of God while starving these addictions is painful, and neither reason nor will-power, either alone or working together, has the patience to endure such pain. Only the love of God has that power.

Patience in obedience is supported by the power of God's Command; patience in Hellfire is impossible because that Command is now an implacable enemy. This world is the world of obedience and repentance and purification; the next world is the world of fixed destinies where repentance is no longer accepted. (See the prophetic *ḥadīth* recounted by al-Tirmidhī, "God accepts the repentance of the servant as long as the soul does not reach the throat"—i.e., until the moment of death.)

The one without God as his Guide is guided by the *nafs*—that is by himself; and "whoever tries to be his own guide has Satan for a guide" (attributed to Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī), The one poisoned by the *nafs* and the *dunyā* who doesn't turn to God for healing has no medicine to cure him but the poison of the *nafs* and the *dunyā*; he believes that if he continues to increase his reliance on those things that have made him sick they will magically transform themselves into cures—as if money could cure greed, as if food could cure gluttony, as if cruelty could

cure anger, as if lust could cure lust. The whole of the *dunyā*, as well as the whole of the *nafs*, are constructed on these idiotic beliefs.

The *dunyā*, composed of limited forms placed in relation to other limited forms, is poor. It claims to possess the power of creation, the power to propagate itself out of its own substance by its own methods, but this is not the case. Those of God's creatures who do not recognize their own intrinsic poverty remain bound to it; those who do recognize this poverty have removed the veils of self-worship, behind which shines the Light of the All-Merciful. Every act of the one who does not recognize his or her own poverty is a sin of self-worship; every act of the one who does recognize it is an act of God. So seek pardon from Him for the foolish sin of believing you are self-determined, which is no different from the absurd belief that you are somehow self-created (cf. Q. 52:35).

The veils of the Heart are like a one-way mirror; they prevent you from seeing out, but they do not prevent God from seeing in. While you are gazing upon your own reflection, God is gazing directly upon your blindness to Him, and upon all the sins you foolishly think that this blindness hides from Him. To believe that your blindness to God banishes Him from existence is to believe that you are His creator, not He yours—and if you are really that powerful, we will listen to no more complaints from you!

## ḤADĪTH 9

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Do not curse My Creatures (*makhlūqīn*) for the curse (*la'nah*) will bounce back to you. O son of Adam! My Heavens (*samawātī*) are suspended in space (*hawā'*) without any pillars (*'amad*) by a Name from among My Names. Your hearts are not going to be straightened by My thousand admonitions (*maw'iẓah*) from My Book. O you people! Just as a stone does not dissolve in water, admonitions will not change your cruel hearts (*al-qulūb al-qāsiyyah*). O son of Adam! With iron, yellow earth and soil turned into embers, how are you not avoiding the prohibited (*ḥarām*)? Why are you not protecting yourself from sins (*al-athām*)? Fear you not the Fires [of Hell] (*nirān*)? Why are you not protecting yourselves from the wrath of the Most Compassionate (*al-Raḥmān*)? Were it not for the bowing (*ruku'*) of elders [in prayer], breast-feeding babies, grazing animals (*bahā'im*), and piously devout youth (*shabābun khushsh'a'*), I would have turned the sky above you to steel. I would not have sent a single drop of water from the sky and I would not have left a single grain (*ḥabbah*) on the earth. I would have poured on you My worst wrath (*'adhāba ṣabbān*).

## الحديث التاسع

لاَ تَلْعَنُوا الْمَخْلُوقِينَ، فَتَرْجِعَ اللَّعْنَةُ عَلَيْكُمْ. يَابْنَ !قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَابْنَ آدَمَ آدَمَ، إِسْتَقَامَتْ سَماوَاتِي فِي الْهَوَاءِ بِلاَ عَمَدٍ بِاسْمٍ مِنْ أَسْمَائِي، وَلاَ تَسْتَقِيمُ قُلُوبُكُمْ بِأَلْفِ مَوْعِظَةٍ مِنْ كِتَابِي. يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كَمَا لاَ يَلِينُ الْحَجَرُ فِي الْمَاءِ كَذَلِكَ لاَ تُفِيدُ الْمَوْعِظَةُ فِي الْقُلُوبِ الْقَاسِيَةِ. يَابْنَ آدَمَ كَيْفَ لاَ تَجْتَنِبُونَ الْحَرَامَ فَلَوْلاَ مَشَائِخُ !وَلاَ اكْتِسَابَ الآثَامِ وَلاَ تَخَافُونَ النِّيرَانَ وَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ غَضَبَ الرَّحْمنِ رُكَّعٌ، وَأَطْفَالٌ رُضَّعٌ، وَبَهَائِمُ رُتَّعٌ، وَشَبَابٌ خُشَّعٌ، لَجَعَلْتُ السَّمَاءَ فَوْقَكُمْ حَدِيداً وَالأَرْضَ صُفْراً وَالتُّرَابَ جِمَاراً، وَلاَ أَنْزَلْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ قَطْرَةً، وَلاَ أَنْبَتُّ لَكُمْ مِنَ الأَرْضِ حَبَّةً، وَصَبَبْتُ عَلَيْكُمُ العَذَابَ صَبّاً

## COMMENTARY ON ḤADĪTH 9

To oppress the creatures of God is to deny our own creaturehood, to make ourselves equal to the Creator; this is the greatest of misfortunes, deserving of the greatest of punishments.

Once, when the Prophet, peace and blessings upon him, was on a journey with his companions, he stopped over to answer the call of nature. Meanwhile, some of his companions noticed a redstart bird with two chicks. He took the chicks away. The bird came and began to circle around them flapping its wings. When the Prophet came and saw the scene, he turned to his companions and said, "Who distressed the bird by taking its chicks from it? Return the chicks to the bird!"

On another occasion, he passed by two men in the middle of a conversation; each them was sitting on his camel. When he saw this, he felt pity for the camels and therefore forbade people from using animals as chairs, meaning that one is not to mount a camel except when required and that when the need is fulfilled, one should dismount and allow it to rest. On still another occasion, the Prophet noticed a burnt ants' nest. "Who burnt the nest?" he demanded. One of his companions replied, "I did." The Prophet became angry and said, "No one but God punishes with fire!" (These three *aḥadīth* were published in the *Saudi Gazette*; at least one, in a different version, was recounted by Ibn Dāwūd.) If the Prophet was angry against the one who persecuted the ants, how much greater will God's anger be against the ones who persecute human beings, those who are the bearers of the Trust?

If the heavens are without any support except a Name of God, how can we turn to them for support instead of to Him? The clouds and the rain, the stars and meteors are words of *al-Aḥad*, the One; without Him they have no more power to help than does an inanimate stone. If you turn in the direction of the echo, you have turned away from the Voice. Nor does self-admonishment have any power to change you; the creature having a particular quality cannot change its quality by acting on the basis of that quality. What use is it for the Heart to try to cajole itself and convince itself? Only God has the power to change the Heart; all the Heart possesses on its own is the power

to *listen*. But if the Heart will not listen to the admonishments of the Book, then what other warning could move it?

Those involved in sin and transgression may feel that they are affirming themselves, while in reality they have lost even the most basic instincts of self-preservation; they live in a world that is parched, barren and unyielding, on desert earth under an iron sky. They believe that power comes from boldness and self-assertion, whereas in reality it springs from the feebleness of the elderly and the helplessness of infants, from animals who cannot plant and harvest but must depend upon what the earth freely gives them, from young men whose peers scorn them as weak and cowardly, as *too stupid even to be cruel*—from anything that recognizes its intrinsic need, and so turns to God, the Sustainer.

The weak, the tender, the subtle, the obscure—these are the pillars of the earth. They are valleys waiting for the rain of Mercy to come—and because of them, and their receptive emptiness, it does come.

## ḤADĪTH 10

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Verily, the truth (*al-ḥaqq*) has been revealed to you from your Lord. Whoever wants to believe: let him believe. And whoever wants to disbelieve: let him disbelieve. Verily, you are not good to a person unless he is good to you. And you do not contact your relatives unless they contact [you first]. And you do not talk to a person unless he talks to you. And you do not feed a person unless he feeds you. No one is superior (*faḍlun*) over another. Indeed, the believers are: those who believe in God and His Messengers, who do good to those who do bad to them, who contact those who have broken [ties of relationship] (*qaṭa'a*) with them, give to those who do not give to them, are just to those who are unjust to them, talk to those who isolate themselves from them, and respect (*yukarrimūn*) those who disrespect them (*ahānahum*).

# الحديث العاشر

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَابْنَ آدَمَ ۩"قَد جَاءَكُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءِ فَلْيَكْفُرْ"۩. إِنَّكُمْ لاَ تُحْسِنُونَ إلاَّ بِمَنْ أَحْسَنَ إِلَيْكُمْ، وَلاَ تَصِلُونَ إلاَّ لِمَنْ وَصَلَكُمْ، وَلاَ تُكَلِّمُونَ إلاَّ لِمَنْ كَلَّمَكُمْ، وَلاَ تُطْعِمُونَ إلاَّ لِمَنْ أَكْرَمَكُمْ. فَلَيْسَ لأَحَدٍ عَلَى أَحَدٍ فَضْلٌ. إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ، الَّذِينَ يُحْسِنُونَ إِلَى مَنْ أَسَاءَ إِلَيْهِمْ، وَيَصِلُونَ إِلَى مَنْ قَطَعَهُمْ، وَيُعْطُونَ إِلَى مَنْ حَرَمَهُمْ، وَيَنْصِفُونَ مَنْ خَانَهُمْ، وَيُكَلِّمُونَ إِلَى مَنْ هَاجَرَ مِنْهُمْ، وَيُكَرِّمُونَ مَنْ أَهَانَهُمْ.

## COMMENTARY ON ḤADĪTH 10

Once the Truth has been revealed, how can we reach certainty with regard to it? And if it has been revealed to all, then why do some believe and others disbelieve? This *ḥadīth* indicates that to believe or disbelieve after the Revelation has come is a decision of the will; if this were not the case, faith would not be praiseworthy nor would the lack of it be culpable. This decision is not made in a vacuum however; it is made in the presence of the Truth. Those who reject the Truth when it has come to them see only the *dunyā*, not God, and treat the *dunyā* as if it were God. If we are good, or kind to relatives, or friendly to neighbors, or willing to feed the hungry, it because God has first been good to us, because He has first shown us lovingkindness, because He has fed us out of His own abundance. We have received this good from Him because we were willing to turn to Him. But if we have chosen to disbelieve, if we have made the *dunyā* our god instead of God, then the situation is reversed.

The one who worships the *dunyā* has received nothing from it, and worships only because he hopes to get something from it in the future. He is waiting to receive a guarantee of payment or to be paid in advance, before he is good, or kind, or generous; but this payment will never be forthcoming. He feels that the world is in debt to him because he himself is in debt to God. He owes God his very existence, and can only pay this debt by returning the gift of his existence to the One who gave it; and the beginning of this return is gratitude. But while his debt to God remains unpaid—or rather, until a payment arrangement has been set up—his feeling that the world owes him something remains.

This is both unfortunate and ironic, since in reality the world will never pay him, and in fact considers him in debt to it, not the other way around. To the degree that he thinks that existence and life and sustenance come from the world, the world will rob him of his sustenance, tax his life, and claim title to his existence. But those who expect nothing from the world because they see all things as coming from God, and existing in God, are naturally kind and generous and just and respectful to others

because they cannot prevent, nor do they wish to prevent, the wealth of God that is poured into them from overflowing and filling the world around them. The rich do not have a single penny to spare. The poor, on the other hand, cannot begin to contain the wealth that they are in contact with, because they know that all abundance is from Him. And no one among us is superior to the others by his own intrinsic merit, since any merit he may manifest is not his own; this is what God means when He says, in the Holy Qur'ān, "God is the Rich, and ye are the poor" (Q. 47:38).

## ḤADĪTH 11

God, the Most High, said: O you people! Verily, this world (*dunyā*) is a house for he who has none and wealth (*māl*) for he who has no wealth. He who gathers from it is devoid of reason (*lā 'aqlu lahu*). He who rejoices in it (*yafraḥu*) has no certainty (*yaqīn*). He who holds firm to it has no trust in God. He who seeks its pleasures does not truly know it. He who takes a perishable sustenance, a short life, and a transient desire, verily he has wronged (*ẓalama*) his soul (*nafsahu*). He has disobeyed His Lord (*rabbahu*). He has forgotten his Hereafter (*ākhirah*). His life has deceived him!

## الحديث الحادي عشر

قالَ اللَّهُ تَعالَى: يَا أَيُّها النَّاسُ إِنَّما الدُّنْيَا دَارُ مَنْ لاَ دَارَ لَهُ، وَ مَالُ مَنْ لاَ مَالَ لَهُ. لَهَا يَجْمَعُ مَنْ لاَ عَقْلَ لَهُ، وَبِهَا يَفْرَحُ مَنْ لاَ يَقِينَ لَهُ، وَعَلَيْها يَحْرِصُ مَنْ لاَ تَوَكُّلَ لَهُ، وَيَطْلُبُ شَهَوَاتِها مَنْ لاَ مَعْرِفَةَ لَهُ. فَمَنْ أَخَذَ نِعْمَةً زَائِلَةً، وَحَياةً مُنْقَطِعَةً، وَشَهْوَةً فَانِيَةً، ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ، وَعَصَى رَبَّهُ، وَنَسِيَ آخِرَتَهُ، وَغَرَّتْهُ حَيَاتُهُ.

## COMMENTARY ON ḤADĪTH 11

Those who have not consciously dwelt in the Presence of God, and have consequently received nothing from Him, must live in this world instead and do their best to till the rocky ground of this world.

Everyone knows that this world is a world of sorrow, instability, suffering and impermanence. Why, then, does it appear so attractive to some people? It appears attractive because they know nothing else, having forgotten God. But they also see in it something beautiful and desirable, whether or not they remember Him or even believe in Him, because He is still the All-Merciful, who shows "His signs on the horizons" (Q. 41:53), even if they are blind to those signs in their own souls. This world cannot help but manifest certain aspects of beauty or pleasure or nobility because it is a reflection of *al-Jamāl*, the Beautiful, *al-Salām*, the Flawless, and *al-Majīd*, the Magnificent. Those who do not know God in the *Bāṭin* must seek Him through his signs in the *Ẓāhir*—but since they do not in fact know what they are seeking, these signs only lead them astray. Their love of beauty leads them to ugliness, their love of "perfect moments" to suffering, their love of magnificence to degradation. At this point two choices present themselves. Those totally devoid of insight will embrace despair, and at the same time seek to distract themselves from that despair through pleasure and accumulation, which of course will only deepen it. But those whose Hearts are not totally blind or dead will be led to ask: If the Beauty I saw was not there when I arrived at the place where I thought I saw it, if Magnificence turned out not to be truly magnificent nor Pleasure really pleasurable, then where did my aspirations to Beauty and Magnificence and Pleasure come from? Could it be that I was seeing the light of them reflected in a mirror, so that I was foolishly attracted to the mirror but not to the Light?

It is these, the ones able to ask this question, whose Hearts are will be capable of turning when the hand of the All-Merciful turns them toward Himself.

## ḤADĪTH 12

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Remember My favors (*n'imatī*) which I bestowed upon you. Just as you cannot find the way (*sabīl*) without a guide you cannot find the way (*ṭarīq*) to the Garden [of Paradise] (*jannah*) without knowledge (*'ilm*). Just as you cannot gather wealth (*māl*) without struggle (*ta'ab*), likewise, you cannot enter the Garden [of Paradise] (*jannah*) without patience in My worship (*'ibādah*). So get closer to Me through supplemental acts of worship (*nawāfil*) and seek My satisfaction by satisfying the poor (*masākīn*). Indeed My mercy (*raḥmatī*) never leaves them for a blink of an eye. O Moses! Listen to what I say for what I say is the truth. Verily, he who is proud towards a poor person (*miskīn*) I will raise him on the Day of Judgment, the size of an atom (*dharrah*) under the feet of the people. He who disgraces a Muslim, I will disgrace him seventy times. He who humbles himself before a scholar (*'alim*) or his parents I will raise him [in rank] in both worlds (*dārayn*). He who insults a believing Muslim (*mu'minan musliman*) for his poverty, verily, he is calling Me to fight with him (*al-muḥārabah*). He who loves a believer (*mu'min*) for My sake angels will greet him in both worlds (*dārayn*): in this world (*dunyā*), secretly, and in the Hereafter (*ākhirah*), openly.

## الحديث الثاني عشر

قالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَابْنَ آدَمَ ! أُذْكُروا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ. كَمَا لاَ تَهْتَدُونَ السَّبِيلَ إلاَّ بِالدَّلِيلِ، كَذلِكَ لاَ تَهْتَدُونَ طَرِيقَ الْجنَّةِ إلاَّ بِالْعِلْمِ، وَكَمَا لا تَجْمَعُونَ الْمَالَ إلاَّ بِالتَّعَب، وَكَذلِكَ لا تَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ إلاَ بِالصَّبْرِ عَلى الْعِبادَةِ. فَتَقَرَّبُوا بِالنَّوافِلِ، وَاطْلُبُوا رِضَائِي بِرِضاءِ الْمَساكِينِ، فَإِنَّ رِضَائِي لا يُفَارِقُهُمْ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ أَبَداً. وَارْغَبُوا فِي مُجَالَسَتِكُمُ الْعُلَمَاءَ فَإِنَّ رَحْمَتِي لاَ تُفَارِقُهُمْ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ أَبَداً. يَا مُوسَى اِسْمَعْ مَا أَقُولُ، وَالْحَقُّ ما أَقُولُ: إِنَّهُ مَنْ تَكَبَّرَ عَلى مِسْكِينٍ، حَشَرْتُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيامَةِ على صُورَةِ ذَرَّةٍ تَحْتَ أَقْدَامِ النَّاسِ. وَمَنْ تَعَرَّضَ بِهَتْكِ سِتْرِ مُسْلِمٍ، أَهْتِكُ سِتْرَهُ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً. وَمَنْ تَوَاضَعَ لِعَالِمٍ أَوْ وَالِدَيْهِ رَفَعْتُهُ فِي الدَّارَيْنِ. وَمَنْ أَهانَ مُؤمِناً مُسْلِماً لِفَقْرِهِ، فَقَدْ بَارَزَنِي في الْمُحَارَبَةِ. وَمَنْ أَحَبَّ مُؤْمِناً مِنْ أَجْلِي، صَافَحَتْهُ الْمَلائِكَةُ في الدَّارَيْنِ: في الدُّنْيَا سِرّاً وَفي الآخِرَةِ جَهْراً.

God's act of creating us is inseparable from His act of returning us to Himself. We make a separation between them in our own minds, but for God the two are one. He creates us by implanting in us all of His Most Beautiful Names; He returns us to Him by unveiling the meaning of these Names and teaching us how to conform our characters to them; since all things are signs of God, creation itself is guidance. If God is *al-Khāliq* (the Creator), He is equally *al-Hādi* (the Guide).

To guide is to impart knowledge; therefore knowledge is the way of return to the Source of all knowledge, who is *al-'Alim* (the Omniscient) and *al-Ḥaqq* (the Truth). This Knowledge is a free gift of God; without His guidance and generosity there is no way we can attain it. Yet we cannot receive and assimilate this gift without work. If a rich man gives a beggar a gold coin, the beggar does not need to labor to receive it, nor can he—and God can work in this way too. But knowledge is a free gift that requires labor to receive. The teacher wants nothing more than to impart knowledge to the pupil; if he is a good teacher he will hold nothing back. Yet the pupil must work to receive this free gift. He must follow the requirements of knowledge in order to assimilate and conform his mind and his character to it. The pupil must learn how to be patient to endure knowledge and its requirements; to learn what knowledge requires of us if we are to receive it is to actually receive that knowledge. The pupil who has understood and satisfied these requirements has become like the pupil of an eye; he receives knowledge directly, as the eye receives light.

The knowledge streaming out from God like an endless wave of light is constant; it never diminishes; it is only our attention that comes and goes. Therefore we are asked to make our worship as constant as God's mercy is constant; we can do this by realizing how our intrinsic poverty is a receptive emptiness that never changes its nature. And the ones who have already realized this emptiness can act as guides for us; they are the poor, the *fuqarā'*.

God speaks only the Truth because He *is* the Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*); likewise, whatever He chooses to speak *becomes* the Truth. He consults nothing outside His own Reality to know and

say what is True, because, outside His Reality, nothing else is. By the same token, what He declares to be Real He eternally establishes in Reality. And there is not even a hair's-breadth of difference, in Him, between knowing the Truth and decreeing the Truth. If He is the Truth, He is not so in any passive way, as in the case of a rock that cannot help being a rock, or a man who cannot help being a man. Likewise He is not the Truth in the sense that a man may claim something for himself and then do his best to enforce that claim, claiming to be strong and then proving it by showing strength, claiming to be wise and then proving it by manifesting wisdom. When a claim is made it may or may not prove to be justified, but God never makes claims, and therefore has no need of self-justification. What He intends, He intrinsically is; what He intrinsically is, He equally intends. He is actively and intentionally Himself, and eternally so, without any actualization of potential or any realization of intent. Human beings must find their true nature (*al-fiṭrah*) by making it through active submission to God, and also make their true nature by finding it through the realization that God has "found" it already, that He "finds" it within Himself eternally, and that this finding is their very existence. But God has already found everything He is and already intended everything He is, without the hair's-breadth of a distinction between His finding and His intending.

He who is arrogant to one of the poor has thereby veiled his own poverty; consequently when *al-Ghanī*, the Rich, passes him by on the street, he will receive nothing from Him. He who disgraces a Muslim has corrupted his own submission, his *taslīm*; he has thereby become a rebel, and will earn the reward of a rebel. Our parents provided us with our physical existence and the shelter and nourishment that maintained that existence while we were in the process of assuming our full human stature. But if our parents begat us and bore us and fed us, likewise the scholar, the *ḥakīm*, the *'ārif*—if he is a person of true knowledge—begets a Heart in us, and nurtures it until it can seek nourishment on its own. He is father and mother to us, consequently he deserves the same honor as a parent.

To belittle one of the Muslim poor, the *fuqarā'*, is to reject the bounty of God. There is no greater insult to *al-Karīm*, the

All-Generous, than ingratitude; it turns the coin He gives into a stone, the loaf he offers into a blade. But to love a Muslim is to see him *in* God, and God in him; this is how "A believer is a mirror to another believer" (prophetic *ḥadīth* recounted by Abū Dāwūd, on the authority of Abū Ḥurayrah). If we succeed in becoming mirrors of this sort, then the angels will bring greetings of love from companion to companion in this world, while in the next world they will (so to speak) bring greetings of love from God to God.

## ḤADĪTH 13

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Obey Me to the extent of your needs towards Me. Disobey Me to the extent of your ability to tolerate the Fire [of Hell] (*nār*). Collect wealth in this world (*dunyā*) according to the length of your stay in it. Collect for your Hereafter (*ākhirah*) according to the length of your stay in it. Do not look at your delayed death at your available sustenance, and at your covered sins. "Everything will perish except My Face" (28:88). If you would fear the Fire [of Hell] (*al-nār*) as much as you fear poverty I would surely have made you rich by giving you countless bounties. If you desired the Garden [of Paradise] (*jannah*) as much as you desired this world I would have made you happy in both worlds (*dārayn*). Do not kill your hearts with love for this world (*dunyā*) for its destruction (*zawāluha*) is near (*qarīb*).

## الحديث الثالث عشر

قَالَ اللَّهُ تعَالَى: يَابْنَ آدمَ أطِيعُونِى بِقَدْرِ حَوَائِجِكُمْ إلَيَّ، وَاعْصُونِي بِقَدْر صَبْرِكُمْ عَلَى النَّار، وَتَزَوَّدُوا مِنَ الدُّنْيَا بِقَدْرِ مَسْكَنِكُمْ فِيهَا، وَتَزَوَّدُوا لِلآخِرَةِ بِقَدْرِ مَسْكَنِكُمْ فيهَا، وَلاَ تَنْظُرُوا إِلَى آجَالِكُمُ الْمُتَأَخِّرَةِ، وَأَرْزَاقِكُمُ الْحَاضِرَةِ، وَذُنُوبِكُمُ الْمَسْتُورَةِ. وَكُلُّ شَيءٍ هَالِكٌ إلاَّ وَجْهِي. وَلَوْ خِفْتُمْ مِنَ النَّارِ كَما خِفْتُمْ مِنَ الفَقْرِ، لأَغْنَيْتُكُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ لا تَحْتَسِبُونَ. وَلوْ رَغِبْتُمْ فِي الْجَنَّةِ كَمَا رَغِبْتُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا، لأَسْعَدْتُكُمْ فِي الدَّارَيْنِ. وَلا تُمِيتُوا قُلُوبَكُمْ بِحُبِّ الدُّنْيَا، فَزَوَالُهَا قَرِيبٌ.

Our need for God is infinite; our ability to tolerate the Fire is non-existent. Since our forms are intrinsically limited, the only unlimited thing that is in us is our need—but if we realize this need as the need for God and nothing else, then it becomes the very presence of God within us, God as *al-Wāsī'*, the Infinite. Likewise if we seek to maintain our limited form as we conceive of it in the face of God, who commands us to change with every breath in obedience to Him, who requires that we surrender our limited forms to Him as *Māliki yawm al-dīn*, "Owner of the Day of Judgment" (Q. 1:3), then we inherit the Fire. The reason we cannot tolerate this Fire is that our idolatry of our own limited human form, which is the thing we habitually turn to for the power to withstand the Fire, in is fact the very source of it.

Time is enough to satisfy the needs of time, but only eternity is sufficient for eternity. Whatever food we may have in the house or money in the bank, still we live "from hand to mouth," from paycheck to paycheck, these paychecks being the breaths of our True Employer entering our mouths to become, for an instant, our own breaths, until we return the present breath to Him so as to make room for the next. And just as we cannot store up our breaths for future use, so whatever comes to us in time must be spent in time, this being the true meaning of the American proverb "you can't take it with you" (i.e., cannot take your material possessions with you when you die). To rely on the mere fact that you haven't died yet, that your sins haven't yet been exposed, is like trying to hold your breath forever—and for those who attempt to stop the passage of time, time is short. But to the degree that we recognize each breath and each moment as coming only from God, then these moments are no longer moments in time; they are transformed into instances of eternity. It is these eternal moments, not the passing moments of the *dunyā*, that constitute our provision for the world to come. The *dunyā* is a mercy from God, the mercy by which He protects us from truths that we cannot yet accept or withstand—but this mercy must end some day; therefore it is incumbent upon us to seek *al-Raḥmān*, the Source of the Mercy that will never end.

Those who fear poverty more than the Fire have rejected the very Poverty that would save them from it, and allow God to enrich them; they are slaves to the *dunyā*. And those who love the world more than Paradise have transformed this world from the Bounty of God, the revelation of the Hidden Treasure of His secret Reality, into an old prostitute, wrinkled and toothless, a whore whose price keeps going up the older she gets. Whoever develops a taste for such a creature will only be sickened and disgusted by the food and the drink and the *houris* of Paradise; by this we can see how a love for God and an appreciation for His bounties are inseparable from authentic good taste.

The destruction of this world is near because this world *is* destruction, and here we are within it. If we let it draw us toward it, it will destroy the Hearts, the organs by which we can know God. But if we gain the power to stand apart from it because we stand *in* God, then the Heart will remove the veil from this world, until *dunyā* and *ākhirah* are one.

## ḤADĪTH 14

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! How many candles have been extinguished by the wind? How many worshippers have been corrupted by their pride? How many poor people have been corrupted by their poverty? How many wealthy people have been corrupted by their wealth? How many healthy people have been corrupted by their health (*'āfiyyah*)? How many scholars have been corrupted by their knowledge? O son of Adam! Plant for Me and profit from Me. Ask of Me and do work for Me. Verily, your profit from Me is that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and which has never been conceived by any human heart (*qalbi bashar*). My treasures do not end. My kingdom is not diminished. I am the Most Generous Provider (*al-Wahhāb*). O son of Adam! Your religion (*dīn*) is your flesh and blood. If you purify your religion (*dīn*) you have purified your flesh and blood. If you corrupt your religion (*dīn*) you have corrupted your flesh and blood. Do not be like a candle which gives light to people and burns itself out by means of its own fire. Remove the love of this world from your heart. Verily, I will never allow My love and love of this world to be joined in one heart just like water and fire cannot be joined in one pot. Be moderate in collecting your sustenance (*rizq*). Verily, sustenance is [already] allotted. The calculating person is denied. The stingy one is blameworthy (*madhmūm*). Blessings do not last for long. The greatest wisdom (*ḥikmah*) is fear (*khashyah*) of God, the Most High. The best of wealth is contentment (*qinā'ah*). The best of belongings (*zād*) is piety (*taqwā*). The worst (*sharr*) of your [supposed] good deeds are those you accomplish while lying (*kidhb*). And the worst of your advice is gossiping (*al-namīmah*). "And your Lord is not unjust in the least to His Servants" [37:82].

## الحديث الرابع عشر

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَابْنَ آدَمَ كَمْ مِنْ سِرَاجٍ أَطْفَأَتْهُ الرِّيحُ، وَكَمْ مِنْ عَابِدٍ أَفْسَدَهُ الْعُجْبُ، وَكَمْ مِنْ فَقِيرٍ أَفْسَدَهُ الْفَقْرُ، وَكَمْ مِنْ غَنِيٍّ أَفْسَدَهُ الْغِنَى، وَكَمْ مِنْ صَحِيحٍ أَفْسَدَتْهُ الْعَافِيَةُ، وَكَمْ مِنْ عَالِمٍ أَفْسَدَهُ الْعِلْمُ. يَابْنَ آدَمَ زَارِعُونِي وَرَابِحُونِي، وَاسْأَلُونِي وَعَامِلُونِي، فَإِنَّ رِبْحَكُمْ عِنْدِي مَا لاَ عَيْنٌ رَأَتْ وَلاَ أُذُنٌ سَمِعَتْ وَلاَ خَطَرَ عَلَى قَلْبِ بَشَرٍ. وَلاَ تَنْفَدُ خَزَائِنِي، وَلاَ يَنْقُصُ مُلْكِي، وَأَنَا الْوَهَّابُ. يَابْنَ آدَمَ دِينُكَ لَحْمُكَ وَدَمُكَ، فَإِنْ صَلُحَ دِينُكَ صَلُحَ لَحْمُكَ وَدَمُكَ، وَإِنْ فَسَدَ دِينُكَ فَسَدَ لَحْمُكَ وَدَمُكَ. فَلاَ تَكُنْ كَالْمِصْبَاحِ يُضِيءُ لِلنَّاسِ وَ يُحْرِقُ نَفْسَهُ بِالنَّارِ. وَأَخْرِجْ حُبَّ الدُّنْيَا عَنْ قَلْبِكَ، فَإِنِّي لاَ أَجْمَعُ حُبِّيَ وَحُبَّ الدُّنْيَا فِي قَلْبٍ وَاحِدٍ أَبَداً، كما لاَ يَجْتَمِعُ الْمَاءُ وَالنَّارُ فِي إِنَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ. وَارْفُقْ بِنَفْسِكَ فِي جَمْعِ الرِّزْقِ، فَإِنَّ الرِّزْقَ مَقْسُومٌ، وَالْحَرِيصَ مَحْرُومٌ، وَالْبَخِيلَ مَذْمُومٌ، وَالنِّعْمَةَ لاَ تَدُومُ. وَخَيْرُ الْحِكْمَةِ خَشْيَةُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، وَخَيْرُ الْغِنَى الْقَنَاعَةُ، وَخَيْرُ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَى، وَشَرُّ صَلاَحِكُمُ الْكِذْبُ، وَشَرُّ نَصِيحَتِكُمُ النَّمِيمَةُ، وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلاَّمٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ.

Those who say "my poverty is my pride" do so in order to emphasize that wealth is a great spiritual danger, in no way praiseworthy in itself—that it is a standing temptation to the sin of pride (a great sin that is also a great stupidity), and that the practice of poverty is a way of realizing the intrinsic poverty of all creatures, and thus opening oneself to the Bounty of God. But those who have literally become proud of their poverty, and who take pride in their asceticism, have gotten the worst of both worlds. They have neither enriched themselves with the goods of the *dunyā* nor saved up enough poverty to purchase the goods of the *ākhirah*. They think they can rely upon their cunning to get the best of God in a commercial transaction, selling themselves as slaves while acting as both the merchant and the merchandise. But since God is already their Owner, how can they profit by selling themselves to Him? The worth of nothing is nothing, while the Bounty that this nothing is able to receive by its very nothingness is Infinite. Those who ask for the Bounty of God will be given it freely and without price, but they will not be able to receive it without labor; receptivity to Mercy takes work.

The light of knowledge is extinguished by the wind of words (*astaghfiru Allāh!*). To take pride in wealth is to turn it into destruction; to take pride in health is to squander it in the belief that one will never die; to take pride in knowledge is to transform it, in the twinkling of an eye, into ignorance. There is no might, nor knowledge, nor life except in God the Almighty, God the All-Knowing, and God the All-Living! And what poverty can compare to the emptiness of *al-Dhāt*, the Divine Essence, in which nothing exists, though it makes an endless gift, to all the worlds, of the essences of all the things that do exist?

Those who plant their poverty like a seed have minted the coin that can purchase His Bounty; those who spend their poverty to purchase that Bounty have not bested God in a deal nor bribed Him for some special favor; they have spent gratitude and bought Generosity, they have spent emptiness to purchase the *al-Qayyūm* (the Self-existing) and *al-Ḥaqq* (the Truth). Those who offer a price for something must have some idea (accurate or mistaken) as to what they want to buy, but those

who are bargaining for God are in the market for the Inconceivable, for a thing which must be purchased with something equally Inconceivable. A Treasure that is endless and never to be diminished must be purchased as a whole lot, not piece by piece. The finite cannot purchase the Infinite by being exchanged for it, only by being annihilated in it.

Your religion is your Heart. If the Heart is sound the body is sound; if the Heart is sick, the body is corrupted. The Heart that consumes itself like a candle only wants to be seen by the world; the Heart that is like a lamp, whose oil can be replenished without its flame being extinguished, replenished from a Tree that grows in neither the east or the west cf. (Q. 24:35), only wants to be seen by God. And if the world also happens to see it—or if God, in His jealousy, chooses to keep it hidden—that is His business.

Those who carry the world or any of its creatures inside their Hearts are idolaters. The Heart is shaped and designed only for *al-Aḥad* the One; if other objects are placed within it, objects that do not fit comfortably its contours and dimensions, the Heart will become ill. This does not mean that we are not to love creatures, only that we must love them *in* God rather than *instead of* God. When the Lamp in the niche of the Heart (cf. Q. 24:35) is lit by His Light, all creatures can be seen and loved by the power of that Light. But if the Light goes out because the Heart is crammed with fears and desires and impressions and memories, and even more idols than these, then we are groping in the dark.

The world is there to provide what is necessary for the body. What it seems to give us beyond this—emotional security, challenges to be met, triumphs to be achieved, mysteries to be investigated—are nothing but reflections, in the mirror of matter, of realities from higher, non-material worlds. Those who are blind to this truth will find only danger in security, only anger in meeting challenges, only defeat in triumph—and in investigations of the mysteries of the life, nothing but chaos and ignorance. This is why the wise never try to take from the world more than it can properly provide. And because they are satisfied with their fortune, great or small, they do not lament its impermanence. Those who try to hold on to what must pass, and

is in fact passing, are mentally imbalanced; they know that everyone and everything must die, but they fail to draw even one of the necessary practical conclusions that flow from this truth. Their stinginess with others is also, without their realizing it, stinginess with themselves. They are like a person who approaches a rich man who is filling beggars' bowls full of money with his bowl already full of sand—sand which has assumed an aura of great value in that person's mind because it is *his* sand.

The greatest wisdom is fear of God because it prevents the growth of every kind of foolishness. The best wealth is contentment because nothing substantive can be purchased with even the greatest material wealth outside a few of the common elements of a contented life—though much more than material security is necessary for real contentment—nor can material security be relied upon because it is always subject to reversal and decay. Material security without piety is always in jeopardy, but piety, in and of itself—even without material security— will always provide enough. Beyond that, many people who have more material resources than they need will spend vast sums of money on irritation, disappointment and anguish because the word "enough" has no meaning for them; submission to the will of God is a blank spot on their maps.

Lying is a sword that cuts whoever wields it, while to take or give advice through gossip is to rely on conjecture and ignore what is certain. To believe that lies have the power to create the situations we invent by telling them is like believing that, on our own authority, we can make the moon split in two by pointing to it and pronouncing the word "split!" (cf. Q. 54:1-2); only God possesses the authority make something true by the power of His speech. To think that gossip can show us things as they really are is like believing that the tracks of chickens in the yard are really a mysterious written language concealing all truth. And if God sets us straight through making us fear Him, through making us content with Him so that He can be content with us (cf. Q. 89:28), through showing us how we can always rely on simple piety, and revealing to us the damage that is caused by lies and gossip—what greater justice could we hope for?

## ḤADĪTH 15

God, the Most High, said: O you who believe! "Why do you say that which you do not do?" [61:2]. Why do you forbid that which you do not forbid yourself? Why do you command that which you do not practice? Why do you collect that which you do not eat? Why do you put off seeking pardon (*tawbah*), day after day, and wait year after year? Have you acquired protection from death? Do you have the power in your hands to keep you from Fires [of Hell] (*nīrān*)? Do you have certainty of entering the Gardens [of Paradise] (*jinān*)? Have the bounties given you a period of grace? Have you been deceived by long hopes from Almighty God? Thus, do not be deceived by your health (*siḥah*) and safety (*salāmah*). Verily, your days are known and your breaths are counted, your secrets are open, your curtains are removed. So fear God! O reasonable people! To protect yourself from the future, use the power you now have in your hands [today]. O son of Adam! Look at your actions before you act. Verily, you are tangled in ruining your life. Every day, from the day you left your mother's womb, you have been getting closer to the grave. So do not be like wood which burns itself in fire for the sake of others. There is no god but God. Verily, verily, Muḥammad is My servant and My messenger.

## الحديث الخامس عشر

قالَ اللّهُ تَعالَى: "يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لاَ تَفْعَلُونَ"، وَلِمَ تَنْهَوْنَ عَمَّا لاَ تَنْهَوْنَ؟ وَ لِمَ تَأْمُرُونَ بِما لاَ تَعْمَلُونَ؟ وَلِمَ تَجْمَعُونَ ما لاَ تَأْكُلُونَ؟ وَلِمَ التَّوْبَةَ يَوْماً بَعْدَ يَوْمٍ تُؤَخِّرُونَ؟ وَبِعامٍ بَعْدَ عَامٍ تَنْتَظِرُونَ؟ أَلَكُمْ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ أمانٌ؟ أمْ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ بَراءَةٌ مِنَ النِّيرَانِ؟ أَمْ تَحَقَّقْتُمُ الْفَوْزَ بِالْجِنَانِ؟ أَنْظَرَتْكُمُ النِّعْمَةُ وَغَرَّكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى طُولُ الآمَالِ؟ فَلاَ تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الصِّحَةَ وَالسَّلامَةُ، فَإنَّ أَيَّامَكُمْ مَعْلومَةٌ وَأَنْفاسَكُمْ مَعدُودَةٌ، وَسَرائِرَكُمْ مَكْشُوفَةٌ، وَأَسْتَارَكُمْ مَهْتُوكَة، فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا اولِي الأَلْبَابِ، وَقَدِّمُوا مَا فِي أَيْدِيكُمْ لِمَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ. يابْنَ آدَمَ تَقَدَّمْ فإنَّكَ فِي هَدْمِ عُمْرِكَ، وَمِنْ يَوْمَ خَرَجْتَ مِنْ بَطْنِ أُمِّكَ، تَدْنُو فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ من قَبْرِكَ، فَلاَ تَكُنْ كَالْخَشَبِ الَّذِي يُحْرِقُ نَفْسَهُ بِالنَّارِ لِغَيْرِهِ، لاَ إِلَهَ إلاَّ اللَّهُ حَقّاً حَقّاً، مُحَمَّدٌ عَبْدِي وَرَسُولِي.

We say that which we do not do because we are like poets, in love with words (cf. Q. 26:226). We love words because we like to pretend that our speech can create reality, while doing our best to forget that only Your Speech has that right and that power.

We forbid things to others that we do not forbid to ourselves because we wish to become like You, who has the right to forbid anything to one of his creatures but forbids Himself nothing that His Infinite Nature entitles Him to—to Whom pleasure, right and power are One. As the shadow envies the sun, we envy You this.

We collect goods we do not immediately consume because, unlike You, we often labor under the power of memory, which commands us to gather together our impressions of things and obey their promptings, instead of obeying Your Word and consuming Your Sustenance in the *waqt*, the present moment of spiritual time. We do this so as to keep something in reserve in case You fail us—or, rather, in case we fail You. And because, in our faithlessness, we are in the habit of taking precautions like this, we do indeed fail You; consequently our precautions also fail.

We delay repentance both because we believe that we will never die, and because we know that, the moment we do repent, the transgressors we have been *will* die. Contradicting ourselves like this, we like to believe that You will never contradict our foolishness, when in reality You have already contradicted it, made it useless, and turned it to dust.

The darkness we have summoned by our endless sleepy litanies has hidden death from us and turned Hell into one fairy tale and Paradise into another; it has told us that we may read either tale at any time, with no consequences. We read one if we wish to frighten ourselves, another if we desire to beguile ourselves. We neither fear Hell nor long for Paradise because, since we take them as mere mental apparitions, we believe we can summon them or banish them any time we like.

Your bounties have given us not a period of grace but a period of testing; may we meet that test, by Your Mercy, and pass it, by Your Guidance, before the time for testing ends and

repentance is no longer accepted (see al-Tirmidhī, "God accepts the repentance of the servant as long as the soul does not reach the throat").

Because God has fulfilled our desires, we have forgotten to ask about His desire. When good fortune comes to us we act as if we were already in Paradise, and so do nothing to prepare for that outcome; when bad luck arrives we feel as if we were already in Hell, consequently we believe that repentance is impossible, and that the doors of Mercy are closed. If we had faith in You and heeded Your exhortations and your warnings, good and bad fortune would be equally beneficial to us; as it is, good fortune and bad fortune are equally destructive to us, blinding our Hearts with dreams and fantasies, blinding them further with desperation and fear. Yes, we are proud of our health and safety—yet our reliance on them has bred a secret terror in us, because we know that they cannot be relied upon in reality. If only we were not always checkmated by Your Reality!

But to You the darkness in which we swim is like open air. So take us beyond praying to You as if we saw You, and let us pray to You in the certainty that You see us (cf. the *ḥadīth* of Gabriel, recounted by Buhkārī and Muslim); the one who works under the eye of the Overseer works well! Others cannot receive anything from You on our behalf, nor can we make a gift to anyone else of Your command to us alone. And the *dunyā* is certainly not in need of any further examples of the fate of the heedless, since it is composed of little else! Consequently we do not pray for more time to repent, but, by Your Mercy, for the will and the wisdom to profitably employ the time You have written for us.

## ḤADĪTH 16

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! I am Ever-Living (*ḥayyu*). I will never die. Act on what I have commanded. Protect yourself from what I have prohibited so I can make you eternal. O son of Adam! I am the King whose Kingdom will never perish. When I say to a thing "Be!" It is. Obey what I have commanded and stay away from those things I have prohibited to the extent that when you say to a thing "Be!" It is. Son of Adam! If your sayings are sweet (*maliḥān*) and your deeds (*'amal*) are unseemly (*qabīḥān*) you are the leader of the hypocrites (*munāfiqin*). If your outer appearance (*zāhir*) is beautiful and your inside (*bāṭin*) is unseemly (*qabīḥan*) you are the worst of the destroyed. O son of Adam! None will enter My garden [of Paradise] (*jannah*) except the one who has humbled himself before My Greatness, one who has spent his day in My remembrance (*dhikrī*), one who has safeguarded his self (*nafs*) from desires (*shahawāt*) for My sake, one who shows brotherhood towards a stranger (*gharīb*), one who takes who comforts (*yuwāsī*) a poor person (*faqīr*), one who is merciful towards the afflicted (*muṣāb*), one who respects the orphan and acts as a kind father (*ab al-raḥīm*) to them, and to the widows like a compassionate husband. Verily, if one who possesses these attributes (*ṣifatah*) if he supplicates (*da'ā*) Me I will answer him at once, and if he asks [anything] of Me, I will give it to him.

## الحديث السادس عشر

قالَ اللّهُ تَعالَى: يَابْنَ آدمَ ! أنَا حَيٌّ لاَ أَمُوتُ. اِعْمَلْ بِما أمَرْتُك، وَانْتَهِ عَمَّا نَهَيْتُكَ، حَتَّى أَجْعَلَكَ حَياً لاَ تَمُوتُ. يَابْنَ آدمَ أنَا مَلِكٌ لاَ أزُولُ، إذا قُلْتُ لِشَيْئٍ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ؛ أطِعْنِي فِيما أمَرْتُكَ، وَانْتَهِ عَمَّا نَهَيْتُكَ، حَتَّى تَقُولَ لِشَيْءٍ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ. يابْنَ آدَمَ إذَا كَانَ قَوْلُكَ مَلِيحاً وَعَمَلُكَ قَبِيحاً، فَأنْتَ رَأْسُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ. وَإنْ كَانَ ظَاهِرُك مَلِيحاً وَبَاطِنُكَ قَبِيحاً فَأنْتَ أهْلَكُ الْهَالِكِينَ. يَابْنَ آدَمَ لا يَدْخُلُ جَنَّتِي إلاَّ مَنْ تَوَاضَعَ لِعَظَمَتِي، وَقَطَعَ نَهَارَهُ بِذِكْرِي، وَكَفَّ عَنِ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنْ أَجْلِي، وَيُرَاخِي الغَرِيبَ، وَيُوَاسِي الفَقِيرَ، وَيَرْحَمُ الْمُصَابَ، وَيُكْرِم الْيَتِيمَ، وَيَكُونُ لَهُ كَالأَبِ الرَّحِيمِ، وَلِلأرَامِلِ كَالزَّوْجِ الشَّفِيقِ. فَمَنْ كَانَ هَذِهِ صِفَتَهُ، يَكُونُ إنْ دَعَانِي لَبَّيْتُهُ، وَإنْ سَألَنِي أعْطَيْتُهُ.

God is eternal; everything else passes. "Everything is perishing except His Face" (Q. 28:88). How, then, can a mere human being become eternal?

The commands of the *dunyā* are the commands of time; they command you to base your life on the struggle to obtain some things and avoid other things in the perishing world of time. By doing this they establish the time of the *dunyā* and drive it forward. The commands of the *dunyā* are the same as the commands of the *nafs al-ammara bi al-su'*, the "self commanding to evil" (cf. Q. 12:53), the imperitives of craving and fear; these are the engines of the *dunyā* and the cause of its perpetual perishing. Some of these commands have a degree of "worldly" wisdom to them—ever-perishing wisdom—while others are outright lies. And even the most perfect obedience to them will do nothing to bring you any closer to *al-Ḥayy*, the Every-Living and *al-Ṣamad*, the Eternal, seeing that the commands that establish the perishing world of *dunyā*-time are themselves ever-perishing. In English there is a well-known proverb, "time is money;" this saying refers to the time of the *nafs* and the *dunyā*.

But God has another time that belongs to Him alone. He says: "Why do they complain to Me of the fluctuations of fortune brought about by Time? I *am* Time" [Bukhārī and Muslim]. Obedience to the commands of *dunyā*-time, beyond the bare minimum necessary for our survival, are prohibited; odedience to the commands of God's time are incumbent upon us. *Dunyā*-time is always perishing because it is always moving farther away from God —farther away from Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*) and into conjecture, farther away from Loving-kindness (*al-Wadūd*) and into cruelty, farther away from Life (*al-Ḥayy*) and into death. But God's time is always growing and strengthening, always reaching greater stations of Love and Knowledge and Power, because it is moving closer to Him, closer to *al-Ḥayy*, and doing so by the power of *al-Ḥayy*. The time of God, the Ever-Living, is a succession of eternal moments. One moment does not look forward to another as its effect nor back to another as its cause; each moment recognizes itself as nothing but an

effect of the One Cause, of God as *al-Mubdī* (the Beginner, the Cause). To recognize the moments of *dunyā*-time as coming from neither the past nor the future, but perpetually arriving straight from God, is to transform *dunyā*-time into Divine time; and those who live in Divine time have become eternal. For them, the perpetual dying of heedlessness has been transformed into the perpetual renewal of *occasion*. Their faces as turned to themselves have perished; the One Face of God, subsisting for them beyond this perishing world, has taken their place.

Only God can say to a thing "Be!," and it is. How can the Divine power of "*kun!*" (Q. 2:117) descend on a mere human being?

If we recognize that we do not exist in our own right, nor as a result of our own knowledge or efforts, but only because of "*kun!*" (Q. 2:117), then we will live in a kingdom that will never perish. How could *al-Mālik al-Mulk*, the Possessor of Absolute Sovereignty, speak a perishing word? Far be this deficiency from *al-Salām*, the Flawless, *al-Qādir*, the All-Powerful, *al-Quddūs*, the Holy, *al-Ṣamad*, the Eternal! Our struggles to create ourselves and maintain ourselves are always perishing, but the Word of God will never die. Those who know themselves as words of God have no words of their own to speak, but only His; their words are echoes and reverberations of the "*kun!*" (Q. 2:117), His Word by which all things are, His Eternal Speech which never passes, His Decree which establishes whatever it speaks as eternal, and ratifies it by His own Eternity. Whatever is spoken by the one who is drowned in the Speech of God, whatever may be the thing to which he says "Be!," that thing *is*—necessarily so, because that thing has always been. God has already created everything; consequently whatever thing we create by the power of His "*kun!*" (Q. 2:117) is in reality created by Him.

But if our actions depart from our words, then these words are no longer part of the Speech of God —as if God could command something and have it fail of its object! Likewise if our words call into existence an outward appearance of beauty that is at odds with an inner ugliness, then these words are lies, and no lie can have any part in the Speech of God—Who is *al-Ḥaqq*, the Truth. And if God is also *al-Mudhill*, the Misguider,

the Dishonorer, and the Humiliator, He enacts the quality of this Name not by lying, but by speaking the Truth to someone He knows will reject it. "Listen to the song of the reed (flute), the tale it tells of separation," said Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī in the first line of his *Mathnavī*; separation, because it has somehow gotten the idea that it is playing itself.

The one who has humbled himself has come in among the humble and the afflcted, and become their treasure. Whatever he distributes out of this treasure—even if he gives away the last penny of it—God will recompense him.

## ḤADĪTH 17

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! To what extent will you complain to Me? To what extent will you forget Me? To what extent will you disbelieve in Me? I am not in the least unjust to the servants (*'ibād*). To what extent will you deny My bounties? Each and every day you receive your sustenance from Me. To what extent will you deny My Lordship (*rubūbiyyatī*)? You have no Lord but Me. How long are you going to treat Me rudely? I have never been rude to you. You may ask a medical doctor about your illness, but who is going to cure you (*yashfikum*) of your sins (*dhunūbikum*)? Verily, you complained and were displeased with My decree. If you do not get food for three days then you say: "Nothing works out for me; I am not well." Indeed (*fa-qad*), he has denied My grace (*ni'mah*) and the one who does not give alms (*zakah*) from his wealth, verily, he has underestimated My book. And when he knows that it is time of prayer and he does not pray (*yafragh lahā*), verily, he is careless about Me. And when he thinks that good is from Me and evil is from Iblīs, verily, he has denied My lordship (*rubūbiyyah*) and made Iblīs My partner.

## الحديث السابع عشر

قالَ اللَّهُ تَعالَى: يَابْنَ آدَمَ إِلى كَمْ تَشْكُونَنِي وَإِلَى كَمْ تَنْسُونِي؟ وَ إِلَى كَمْ تَكفُرونِي وَ لَسْتُ بِظَلَّامٍ للعَبِيدِ؟ وَإِلَى مَتَى تَجْحَدُونَ بِنِعْمَتِي وَرِزْقُكُمْ يَأْتِيكُم في كُلِّ يومٍ مِنْ عِنْدِي؟ وَإِلى مَتَى تَجْحَدُونَ بِرُبُوبِيَّتي وَلَيْسَ لَكُم رَبٌّ غَيْرِي؟ وَإِلَى مَتَى تَجْفُونَنِي وَلَمْ أَجْفُكُمْ؟ وَإِذا طَلَبْتُمُ الطَّبِيبَ لأَبدَانِكُمْ فَمَنْ يَشْفِيكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ، فَقَدْ شَكَوْتُمْ وَسَخِطتُمْ قَضَائي؟ وَإِذَا لَمْ يَجِدْ أَحَدُكُمْ قُوتَ ثَلاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فَقَالَ: أَنَا بِشَرٍّ وَلَسْتُ بِخَيْرٍ، فَقَدْ جَحَدَ بِنِعْمَتِي. وَ مَنْ مَنَعَ الزَّكاةَ مِنْ مَالِهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَخَفَّ بِكِتابِي، وَإِذَا عَلِمَ بِوَقْتِ الصَّلاَةِ وَلَمْ يَفْرَغْ لَهَا فَقَدْ غَفَلَ عَنِّي، وَإِذا قَالَ إِنَّ الْخَيْرَ مِنْ عِنْدِي وَالشَّرَّ مِنْ عِنْدِ إِبْلِيسَ فَقَدْ جَحَدَ رُبُوبِيَّتِي وَجَعَلَ إِبْلِيسَ شَرِيكاً لِي.

## COMMENTARY ON ḤADĪTH 17

This saying begins by enumerating the ways in which the Sons of Adam violate their trust with God: complains against God's decree, heedlessness, disbelief; rebellion against the afflictions of destiny that blinds you to the bounties hidden in it.

The one who complains of God's decree is compared to someone who complains to a doctor about his illness and then will not take his medicine. Rūmī, in *Fihi mā-Fihi*, also compares God to a doctor. A doctor wants sick people to exist so that he can practice his profession; but he also wants people to get well, because his profession is to make them well.

If you believe that the things you consider good are from God, and the things you consider evil—like testing and chastisement and retribution—are from some other source, then you are in a state of *shirk*. The Devil is in no way a force opposed to God; by God's decree he is a servant of Him, albeit against his own will. Nor can you yourself ever depart from that servanthood. If you serve God willingly, you are a child of the Garden; if you serve Him unwillingly, you are a child of the Fire.

Natural disasters and collective evils are not sent by the Devil; they are sent by God to remind us that "everything will perish except His Face" (Q. 28:88). Nor is the evil of our own nature sent by Iblīs; we conceive it ourselves, by *nafs al-ammara bi al-su'*, the soul that commands to evil (cf. Q. 12:53). Only then do we invoke Iblīs for his help in acting it out. God does not wish that we sin nor does He force us to sin. Yet our sin is from Him just as surely as our wisdom and our virtue, because the root of all transgression against God is the dark belief on the part of the *nafs al-ammara bi al-su'* that it in fact *is* God, and consequently that it possesses every right and every power—a belief that is immediately countered either by God as *al-'Adil*, the Just Judge—though His chastisement—or by God as *al-Mudhill*, the Misguider or Humiliator—through His deception. God misguides the soul that refuses guidance; as the western proverb expresses it, He "gives it enough rope to hang itself." The *nafs al-ammara bi al-su'* prays for evil from God, and God answers its prayer.

The *nafs* within us, in its most secret essence, is the Hidden Treasure whose outward manifestation is the universe. This Treasure does not belong to us, however; it belongs to God. Iblīs looked into his own soul and saw that it was made of the Divine Fire; this is why he refused God's command to bow down to Adam, a mere creature of clay (cf. Q. 7:11-12). In making his refusal to prostrate to anything other than God he believed that he was remaining faithful to Him; the one who "makes his desire his god" (Q. 45:23) believes the same thing. They are wrong. We remain faithful to God not by identifying with Him, through *ḥulūl*, but by submitting to Him, through *islām*.

Those who are not content with God's decree tend to see all affliction as God's punishment. But what if it were really guidance; or protection; or a secret face of Mercy; or an expression of God's trust in our loyalty to Him, His certain knowledge that we will never reject Him?

The one who thinks that all good comes from God and all evil from the Devil is often also the one who is blind to his own transgressions, and thus equally blind to God's justice.

## ḤADĪTH 18

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Be patient and I will elevate you. Thank Me and I will increase [My bounties] towards you. Ask Me for forgiveness and I will forgive you. Call upon Me, I will answer you. Ask of Me, I will provide for you. Give charity (*ṣadaqah*) for Me and I will increase your sustenance (*rizq*). Visit your relatives and I will add to your age by delaying death. Ask me for good health [and a long life]. And while you are alone, seek safety. Seek sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*) in piety (*wara'*). Seek asceticism in repentance (*tawbah*). Seek worship (*'ibādah*) in knowledge. Seek independence (*ghinā*) in contentment (*qanā'ah*). How can you seek worship when you are satiated (*ma'a al-shabi'*)? How can you have an enlightened heart by sleeping a lot? How can you have fear of God, the Most High, with fear of poverty? How can you seek the pleasure of Almighty God by degrading the poor (*masākīn*)?

## الحديث الثامن عشر

قالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَابْنَ آدَمَ! اِصْبِرْ وَتَوَاضَعْ أَرْفَعْكَ، وَاشْكُرْ لِي أَزِدْكَ، وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِي أَغْفِرْ لَكَ، وَادْعُنِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكَ، وَاسْأَلْنِي أُعْطِكَ، وَتَصَدَّقْ لِي أُبَارِكْ لَكَ فِي رِزْقِكَ، وَصِلْ رَحِمَكَ أَزِدْ فِي عُمْرِكَ، وَأُنْسِي أَجَلَكَ. وَاطْلُبْ مِنِّي الْعَافِيَةَ بِطُولِ الصِّحَّةِ، وَاطْلُبِ السَّلَامَةَ فِي الْوَحْدَةِ، وَالإِخْلَاصَ فِي الْوَرَعِ، وَالزُّهْدَ فِي التَّوْبَةِ، وَالْعِبَادَةَ فِي الْعِلْمِ، وَالْغِنَى فِي الْقَنَاعَةِ. يَابْنَ آدَمَ، كَيْفَ تَطْمَعُ فِي الْعِبَادَةِ مَعَ الشِّبَعِ؟ وَكَيْفَ تَطْلُبُ جَلَاءَ الْقَلْبِ مَعَ كَثْرَةِ النَّوْمِ؟ وَكَيْفَ تَطْمَعُ فِي الْخَوْفِ مِنَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى مَعَ خَوْفِ الْفَقْرِ؟ وَ كَيْفَ تَطْمَعُ فِي مَرْضَاةِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى مَعَ احْتِقَارِ الْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ؟

One of the greatest sources of impatience is the desire to elevate oneself—to get out of the hole one feels oneself to be in, to attain higher things, either worldly or spiritual. But since all elevation comes from God, it is best not to rival Him by struggling to rise. Patience is not the dumb hopeless resignation that many believe it to be, but rather conformity to the Divine Will. The patient person knows both how to work, and how to wait, in line with that Will. Such a person's work will be efficient and intelligent because it is free of unnecessary stress and strain; likewise his or her periods of imposed inaction will be restful and restorative because they are free from worry.

Gratitude to God is the recognition that He alone is the Bounteous; consequently it puts the grateful one in touch with that Bounty. To be grateful is to empty oneself of possessiveness, grasping and greed. Some people are so ungrateful that if they find a sum of money lying on the street—or if God sends them an elevated spiritual state—they will congratulate themselves, just as if they had worked to earn it.

We are directed both to ask for more from God and to give more out of what we have received from Him. These two are inseparable. Those who give have emptied themselves to receive; those who have received are overflowing with the need to give. In our own kind of time these appear as two separate but complementary phases, like night and day, exhaling and inhaling—but in God's time they are simultaneous. What we receive is immediately given; what we give, we receive.

Just as we become stronger, not weaker, through regular exercise, so those who hoard their time will find it dwindling, while those who are generous with it will be given more of it—not necessarily in terms of added years, but certainly in terms of the greater perceived richness and duration of hours and minutes. This is because time does not belong to us, but to God; it is through what we experience as time that wave after wave of His Eternity flow through the endless worlds He creates and sustains.

To pray for health, while you are healthy, means (on one level): "Do not wait until the last minute to ask for Mercy or it may be too late." But in terms of the science of spiritual states,

the *aḥwāl*, it means: "Do not take an elevated state (here symbolized by "health") as an excuse to squander what God has given to you by turning it over to your *nafs*. Do not turn away from God so you can immediately spend the spiritual gifts and bounties He has given you; always ask for more, because this requires that you always face in His direction." If the superabundance of His gifts goes beyond your capacity to contain them, if they overflow your limits to bless others or help the world, then that is His work, not yours.

To seek safety while mingling with others is to protect yourself from the *dunyā*; to seek safety while alone is to protect yourself from your *nafs*. Those who think they are safe simply because they have successfully hidden themselves from the world have no idea whatsoever of how much greater the Greater Jihad is than the Lesser one.

Piety is a necessary virtue, but without sincerity it is only hypocrisy—and hypocritical piety is worse than nothing—worse even than honest atheism (which is indeed nothing).

Repentance is a necessary virtue, but without self-denial it is worth no more than the "sincere" promises of a confirmed alcoholic that he will never take another drink.

Spiritual knowledge is a necessary virtue and a high gift, but if it is without worship—if it undermines the strength of worship—if it whispers to the soul that worship is unnecessary to the one who possesses it—then it no better than the darkest ignorance....or, no: it *is* the darkest ignorance.

Spiritual contentment is a necessary virtue and a high gift, but if it is without independence—independence from the world, independence from the *nafs*—then it is nothing but complacency, and complacency (unless God wills otherwise) is an incurable disease. The heroin addict about to die of an overdose; the traveler in a frozen wilderness in the process of freezing to death; the diver on the edge of drowning due to nitrogen narcosis or "rapture of the deep"—all of these unfortunates are affected by a profound, intoxicating contentment. Dependency on the *dunyā* and the *nafs* is bondage and destruction; dependency on God is freedom and the final awakening from all complacency—which is nothing, in reality, but unconscious fear. Dependency on God is a peace that is

never disturbed by sleep, because it is equally an intimacy that is never separate from the awe of *al-'Aẓīm*, the Tremendous. And the more fully we recognize our intrinsic dependency on God—Who is *al-Qayyūm*, the Independent, the Self-Sufficient—the more fully we become qualified by His Most Beautiful Names, until we reach the station of "independent *of* God *by* God." As we become ever more profoundly aware of our neediness, we become ever more perfectly drowned and annihilated in His Bounty. What room is there for "dependency," if there is only He?

The essence of worship is to recognize one's need—not one's present and temporary need, but the need that is intrinsic to all of us all the time, seeing that "God is the Rich, and ye are the poor" (cf. Q. 47:38). How can someone who is stuffed with the illusion of his own wealth, whose heart and belly are crammed with world and with *nafs*, find the neediness necessary for worship?

There is no *ma'rifah*, no spiritual knowledge, without vigilance. Those who are always awake to appease and accept and contest the threats and promises and judgments of the world (that "sneaking whisperer," Q. 114:4) are sound asleep; those who are peacefully asleep and resting on God, their Protector and Sustainer, are wide awake. "Men are asleep; when they die they awaken" (prophetic *ḥadīth*, Ibrāhīm ibn 'Alī al-Ḥusrī). If you fear the poverty that opens you to the Bounty of God, which (in the *bāṭinī* sense) is the sort of poverty that makes it impossible for you to set up and worship any self-concept whatsoever, how can you feel the awe of that Bounty descending upon you? You never will feel it; you have left no room for it.

And if you scorn those you consider to be too poor or too foolish to take pride in themselves and lord it over others, if you see such people as losers in terms of the world, then in the *ākhirah* it is you who will be "among the losers" (Q. 2:27 et. al.). You are already among them, even now.

## ḤADĪTH 19

God, the Most High, said: O you people! There is no intellect (*'aql*) without thought (*tadbīr*). There is no devotion in annoyance. Family status is not higher than good manners (*adab*). There is no intercession like repentance (*tawbah*). There is no worship like seeking knowledge. There is no worship without fear of God (*khashiyyah*). There is no poverty without patience. There is no worship like success (*tawfīq*). There is no consort better than reason (*'aql*). And there is no companion worse than ignorance (*jahl*). O son of Adam! Free yourself from this world through My worship. I will fill your heart with independence, your hands with sustenance, and your body with rest. Do not neglect My remembrance or I will fill your heart with poverty, your body with exhaustion, your heart (*ṣadruka*) with grief and anxiety your body with sickness (*suqmān*), and your world (*dunyā*) with difficulty.

# الحديث التاسع عشر

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ لاَ عَقْلَ كَالتَّدْبِيرِ، وَلاَ وَرَعَ كَالْكَفِّ عَنِ الأَذَى، وَلاَ حَسَبَ أَرْفَعُ مِنَ الأَدَبِ، وَلاَ شَفِيعَ كَالتَّوْبَةِ، وَلاَ عِبَادَةَ كَالعِلْمِ، وَلاَ صَلاَةَ إِلاَّ مَعَ الْخَشْيَةِ، وَلاَ فَقْرَ إِلاَّ مَعَ الصَّبْرِ، وَلاَ عِبَادَةَ كَالتَّوْفِيقِ، وَلاَ قَرِينَ أَزْيَنُ مِنَ الْعَقْلِ، وَلاَ رَفِيقَ أَشْيَنُ مِنَ الْجَهْلِ. يَابْنَ آدَمَ تَفَرَّغْ لِعِبَادَتِي، ِلأَمْلأَ قَلْبَكَ غِنىً وَيَدَيْكَ رِزْقاً، وَجِسْمَكَ رَاحَةً. وَلاَ تَغْفُلْ عَنْ ذِكْرِي، فَأَمْلأَ قَلْبَكَ فَقْراً، وَيَدَنَكَ تَعَباً، وَصَدْرَكَ غَمّاً وَهَمّاً، وَجِسْمَكَ سُقْماً وَدُنْيَاكَ عُسْرَةً.

Reason cannot be reduced to a mechanical, self-contained exercise and remain reason. It does not hold within itself the power to reach authoritative opinions, but must first consult thought. And thought is not truly thought, nor can it ponder or weigh anything according to an accurate scale, unless it, in its turn, consults the Heart, where the eternal Names of all things, which are the Names of God, are always circling. Reason unpacks, analyzes, and shows the necessary relationships between the various aspects of what the Heart has revealed to it in a single flash; it argues from premise to conclusion along a line of time—true time, not the false and deceptive time of heedlessness and passion; it is discursive; it is the son of the Pairs. But the Heart *knows*; it is the daughter of *tawḥīd*. The word *'aql*, however, also denotes "intelligence," of which logic and discursive reason are only one of several manifestations. The sort of thought that arises from one's reactions to other thoughts is ambiguous and unreliable; the sort of thought that comes directly from the Transcendent Intellect, from the Eye of the Heart, is the foundation of practical certainty.

If we burden ourselves with religious duties and measure our degree of piety by how irksome they are to us, we are like a man who woos a reluctant woman he hopes to marry by swearing to make great sacrifices for her, rather than by his inability to conceal his overflowing delight in her presence. The one who brings to God his wounds will be given bandages and ointment; the one who brings God his love will be admitted to His Presence.

If aristocratic blood does not express itself in terms of good breeding, and if good breeding does not manifest as true *adab*, it is if our illustrious grandparents had died before ever meeting each other. Likewise if *adab* is established in one with lowly status, it is as if a family of shepherds had received the son of a king as a foster child. The lowly father with an exalted son is honored; the exalted father with a degenerate son is despised. And if the spiritual blessings we have received from God do not show themselves in our behavior and comportment, even down to the smallest things, it is as if we had rejected them in our pride, or squandered them by our ingratitude. But when our *adab*

meets the mark by equaling the Generosity God demonstrated in the act of adorning our Hearts with it, then that *adab* no longer belongs to us; it is His Generosity appearing in this world.

Who do we expect to intercede for us if we do not intercede for ourselves by repenting? Can another repent for us? Can another walk for us, bearing the burden of the weakness of our body, or experience remorse for us, bearing the burden of the heaviness of our self-accusation, or see for us, bearing the burden of the blindness of our hearts? Many of the difficulties we encounter in life are based on the wrongs we have done to ourselves (cf. Q. 2:57), and continue to do over and over again, day in and day out. As for the suffering that remains after we have repented of these wrongs—and we must always remember that there is no greater way of wronging oneself than injuring or degrading another—then God, if He wills, will give us the power to know these sufferings as His surgical action to remove the remaining residues of self-wrong that still darken the Heart.

Whoever worships God will obey Him—this is *islām*. The root and perfection of willing obedience is love—this is *īmān*. What we love we will want to know, and we *will* know it, with intimacy, objectivity and depth—this is *iḥsān*.

But true intimacy with God is never without awe. If we do not possess the capacity to know God through both His Beauty and His Majesty, and to see Beauty and Majesty as One in Him, then our intimacy will be nothing but vulgar familiarity, leading us to take Him for granted. Whoever takes God for granted will disobey Him, and will consequently encounter His Majesty—not through heedfulness and obedience and gratitude, but through God's humiliation and punishment for our heedlessness, ingratitude and transgression.

The one who is poor in material terms knows that he depends for his day to day survival on the generosity of others; the one who is poor in spiritual terms knows that he does not even possess his own existence, much less his knowledge, his virtues or his accomplishments. He is nothing in himself; he is no more nor less than what God knows him to be, and God's Knowledge is inseparable from His Being. We can no more use our imperfect and fleeting knowledge of ourselves to possess ourselves than we can store up our breaths for future use; the fact

that we continue to breathe while sound asleep proves that God is breathing for us. To claim that you are the author of your own acts or thoughts or qualities is no different from claiming that you have created yourself out of nothing. Such foolish beliefs are all the products of self-will, which tries to convince us, day in and day out, that we will not be able to survive, to achieve, to escape, to prevail, unless we become become our own masters. To give in to these commands is like accepting counterfeit money or bad checks, or depending on help from someone who is unreliable, or an enemy, or a thief. When we attempt to rely on such help, when we go to cash those checks, when we try to spend that kind of fool's gold, we will find that we do not have the wherewithal to complete our tasks or pay our debts. But these offers of false help are always there, seducing us, threatening us; they are truly relentless. They never stop enticing us to become rich, or putting us down for being poor.

The patience we must exercise to resist these temptations, to not pay attention to their voices, is the patience of spiritual poverty. This patience, like everything else, comes to us through God, in this case specifically through His Name *al-Ṣabūr*, the Patient. God is Patient because He is the Eternal, *al-Ṣamad*, and the Self-Existent, *al-Qayyūm*. And if there is no spiritual poverty without patience, it is equally true to say that there is no patience without poverty. To have reached certainty that "God is the Rich, and ye are the poor" (Q. 47:38) is to know that God is sufficient for all our needs, and to find rest in His Will. Patience is easy for those in true submission (*taslīm*) to Him; they are destitute of arrogance, self-images, and personal agendas. They are the *fuqarā'*; for them, the voices of the commanding *nafs* have become silent.

To begin with, there is no worship without guidance because God has instructed us how to worship Him through the *sharī'ah*, and those who know the *sharī'ah* are worthy guides to this level of worship. But beyond this, God sends His Guidance directly to the Hearts of those who are receptive to it, and the understanding and acceptance of this Guidance, our immediate and unquestioning response to it, is in itself the most perfect form of worship. Those who understand that "Every day doth some new work employ Him" (Q. 55:29) and are responsive to the

ongoing, swift, subtle and often abrupt changes in His Command to them, like soldiers to the commands of their captain, are the ones known as the *Banī al-Waqt*, the Sons of the Moment.

The Transcendent Intellect, the Eye of the Heart, is closer to us than our jugular vein (cf. Q. 50:16), because it is the Witness of the entirety of our body, speech and mind, while remaining completely independent of them. If "heaven and earth cannot contain Him, but the Heart of His willing slave can contain Him," (*ḥadīth qudsī* repeated by al-Ghazālī) then the Eye of the Heart is the seat of God as *al-Shāhid*, the Universal Witness, Who shows us His signs on both the horizons and within our souls (cf. Q. 41:53).

Those who foolishly believe that they rule the *dunyā*—both the horizons where visible events take place and souls subject to invisible states, the souls of their dupes—necessarily believe that ignorance is the most powerful thing in the world because it is what allows them to determine the beliefs and actions of the ignorant masses through deception, disinformation, propaganda, social engineering and false flag operations. However, those who employ deception are also in the process of deceiving themselves and consequently damaging their own ability to recognize the truth. And those who are ignorant of the truth of eternal principles, of spiritual states, of psychological motivations and of natural and historical forces—which knowledge is ultimately based on the certainty of the Reality and Presence and Sovereignty of God—will base all their actions on false premises and inaccurate evaluations of the situations they confront. Their works will either come to nothing, or else produce unintended consequences of such a horrendous nature that those who inherit them will ultimately be destroyed in both body and soul (cf. Q. 10:80-81). If one's action with regard to changing situations is based on a true knowledge of the unchanging nature of God and the eternal Principles that emanate from His intrinsic nature, then a small amount of effort will produce a powerful result. In the absence of this knowledge, in ignorance of God and His laws, a vast amount of effort and courage and cunning and self-sacrifice will produce either a negligible result or an unmitigated disaster.

The flip side of the false belief that you have created yourself and are master of your own destiny is the false belief that you are created and determined solely by circumstances; these beliefs are inseparable from each other and are never found apart. The Remembrance of God frees you from these illusions, given that God is *al-Qayyūm*, the Self-Existing; *al-Muqtadir*, the All-Determiner; and *al-Khāliq*, the Creator.

But as for those who forget God, their Hearts will be closed to His Presence, and their minds consequently filled with chaos, passion, prejudice and obsession, their feeling-natures polluted with toxic emotions, their bodies twisted and clenched with blockages to the flow of life-energy, and their relationship to the world distorted due to their many attempts to interact with circumstances on the basis of chronic tension, negative emotions, erroneous and self-contradictory ideas, and a fundamental lack of the detachment, balance and objectivity that only certainty of God's Reality and Presence can provide. "They forgot Him, so He caused them to forget themselves" (Q. 59:19).

## ḤADĪTH 20

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Death will reveal your secrets (*asrār*). The Day of Judgment is going to be a test of your deeds (*akhbār*). The Book [of Deeds] will reveal your intimate secrets. When you commit a minor sin, do not think of it as little; rather, think against whom you committed the sin. If you get little sustenance, do not think of it as little; rather, think about whom has granted you sustenance. O son of Adam! Do not feel secure from My plan (*makrī*) for My plan is concealed from the movement of an ant on a stone in utter darkness. O son of Adam! Have you completed the commands as I have commanded you? Have you comforted the poor with your wealth and your souls? Have you been good towards people who have been bad to you? Have you forgiven those who were unjust to you? Have you visited relatives who have broken off their ties with you? Have you ever been just towards those who have betrayed you? Have you talk to those who have left you? Have you taught your children good manners? Have you asked scholars (*'ulama'*) about your religion (*dīnikum*) and your world (*dunyākum*)? Verily, I will not look at your beautiful faces and pleasant (*ḥasan*) appearance but I will look at your hearts and deeds and will be pleased on account of these characteristics (*khiṣāl*).

## الحديث العشرون

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَابْنَ آدَمَ الْمَوْتُ يَكْشِفُ أَسْرَارَكَ، وَالْقِيَامَةُ تَبْلُو أَخْبَارَكَ، وَالكِتَابُ يَهْتِكُ أَسْتَارَكَ. فَإذا أَذْنَبْتَ ذَنْباً صَغِيراً، فَلا تَنْظُرْ إلَى صِغَرِهِ، وَلَكِن أَنْظُرْ إلَى مَنْ عَصَيْتَهُ. وَإذا رُزِقْتَ رِزقاً قَلِيلاً، فَلاَ تَنْظُرْ إلَى قِلَّتِهِ، وَ لَكِنِ أنْظُرْ إلَى مَنْ رَزَقَكَ. يَابْنَ آدَمَ لاَ تَأْمَنْ مِنْ مَكْرِي، فَإنَّ مَكْرِي أَخْفَى مِنْ دَبِيبِ النَّمْلِ عَلى الصَّفَاءِ، في اللَّيْلَةِ الظَّلْمَاء. يَابْنَ آدَمَ هَلْ أَدَّيْتُمْ فَرَائِضِي كَما أَمَرْتُكُمْ؟ وَهَلْ وَاسَيْتُمُ المَسَاكِينَ بِأَموالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ؟ وَهَلْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ إلَى مَنْ أَسَاءَ إلَيْكُمْ؟ وَهَلْ عَفَوْتُمْ عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَكُمْ؟ وَهَلْ وَصَلْتُمْ مَنْ قَطَعَكُمْ؟ وَهَلْ أَنْصَفْتُمْ مَنْ خَانَكُمْ؟ وَهَلْ كَلَّمْتُمْ مَنْ هَاجَرَكُمْ؟ وَهَلْ أَدَّبْتُمْ أَوْلاَدَكُمْ؟ وَهَلْ سَأَلْتُمُ العُلَمَاءَ مِنْ أَمْرِ دِينِكُمْ وَدُنْيَاكُمْ؟ فَإنِّي لاَ أَنْظُرُ إلَى صُوَرِكُمْ، وَ لاَ إلَى مَحاسِنِكُمْ، وَ لَكِنْ أَنْظُرُ إلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ، وَأَرْضَى مِنْكُمْ بِهذِهِ الْخِصَال.

The world and the body are a veil; when this veil is removed, the true state of the soul is revealed. When everything you ever took hold of, or identified with, or simply fell into, in order to serve your forgetfulness of God is stripped away, then there is only God as *al-Shāhid*, the Absolute Witness, witnessing the play of His Names within you: the Names of Mercy if you submitted to Him; the Names of Wrath if you did not.

And when you "die before you are made to die" (prophetic *ḥadīth*) then the secrets of the soul are revealed. The *nafs al ammara bi al-su'*, the soul commanding to evil (cf. Q. 12:53), does its damage because it is hidden from us; in its seclusion it dreams that it is God and possesses all the rights and powers of God. But, when you have died before you are made to die, then the soul renounces all claims, even its claim to existence, and subsists as the mirror in which God limitlessly gazes upon His own nature: "light upon light" (Q. 24:35).

Who can comfort the poor? They are a bottomless pit of need. Who can be good toward those who have treated them with viciousness or cunning deception or cruel indifference? Who can forgive their enemies without thereby embracing destruction at their hands? Who can accept those who have rejected them? Who can bear the presence of traitors? Whose word has the power to penetrate the silence of those who will not speak to them, who will not listen? The only One capable of this is *al-Raḥmān*, the All-Merciful; *al-Ghafūr*, the All-Forgiving; *al-Mu'min*, the Faithful; *al-Ṣabūr*, the patient; and *al-Fattaḥ*, the Opener.

You cannot accomplish these miracles of charity and forgiveness, but God can; your only duty is to *be there* for Him, and not reject His help.

The soul is like a child in need of love, protection, training and education. If you try to break it, it will ultimately break you, and then do its best to break others from then on, following the lesson it has learned. If you work to teach it *adab* without teaching it the meaning and purpose of *adab*, its answer will be: "Who cares?" And what is the meaning of *adab* and the purpose

of it? It is Love; this is the precise answer to the soul's impulsively rebellious question: "Who cares?"

Only the true scholars, the shaykhs, the guides can teach you how to be found by the Names of God—Names that will give you the knowledge and the power to obey His commands.

A beautiful face is from the Beauty of God—unfortunately, it is on the road to destruction. But hearts and deeds are on the road to Eternity.

## ḤADĪTH 21

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Look at yourself and the rest of My creation. If you find a brother dearer to you than yourself offer him your dignity. Otherwise, increase your honor by repentance (*tawbah*) and good deeds (*'amal al-sāliḥ*) if your soul is dear to you (*'azīzah*). O you who believe! Remember my bounty (*ni'mah*) towards you and fear God before the Day of Judgment (*yawm al-qiyāmah*); the Day when will come what is to come (*wāqi'ah*); the Day of Account (*taghabūn*) [in which the destiny of believers and unbelievers is determined]; the Day of Concrete Reality; "The Day whose length is 50,000 years" [70:4]; the Day when no excuses will be accepted; the Day of the Great Cataclysm (*ṭāmmah*); the Day of Deafening Thunder (*ṣākhah*); the Dismal Calamitous Day; the Day when no soul will have power over another; the Day of Obliteration (*damdamah*); the Day of Earthquake; the Day of Startling Calamity (*qāri'ah*). So fear God on account of the day when mountains will perish because of the earthquake; [the day of horror that] will turn children's hair gray; and do not be among those who said: "we hear and we disobey" [2:93; 4:46].

## الحديث الواحد والعشرون

قالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَابْنَ آدَمَ! أنْظُرْ إلَى نَفسِك وَإلَى جَمِيعِ خَلقِي، فَإنْ وَجَدْتَ أخاً أعَزَّ إلَيْكَ مِنْ نَفْسِكَ، فَاصْرِفْ كَرَامَتَكَ إلَيْه، وَإلاَّ فَأكْرِمْ نَفْسَكَ بِالتَّوْبَةِ وَالْعَمَلِ الصَّالِحِ إنْ كانَتْ عَلَيْكَ عَزِيزَةً. ۩"يَا أيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ"۩، وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَيَوْمِ الوَاقِعَةِ، وَيَوْمِ التَّغَابُنِ، وَيَوْمِ الْحَاقَّةِ، وَيَوْمٍ كانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ ألْفَ سَنَةٍ، وَيَوْمِ لاَ يَنْطِقُونَ ولاَ يُؤْذَنُ لَهُمْ فَيَعْتَذِرُونَ، وَيَوْمِ الطَّامَّةِ، وَيَوْمِ الصَّاخَّةِ، وَيَوْمٍ عَبُوسٍ قَمْطَرِيرٍ، وَيَوْمِ لاَ تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِنَفْسٍ شَيْئاً، وَيَوْمِ الدَّمْدَمَةِ، وَيَوْمِ الزَّلْزَلَةِ، وَيَوْمِ القَارِعَةِ. فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لِيَوْمِ مَوَاقِعِ الْجِبَالِ، قَبْلَ الصَّيْحَةِ وَالزَّلْزَالِ، إذَا شَابَ مِنْ هَوْلِهِ الأطْفَالُ، وَلاَ تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا.

By obeying God we do good only to ourselves; by rebelling against Him we harm only ourselves (cf. Q. 2:57). Religion is sent by Him strictly for our good; to remain faithful to the norms He has established for us—norms which are not meant to be burdensome but are intrinsically easy because they are in line with human nature—is thus a praiseworthy form of selfishness. To desire true good for oneself is the essence of religion. And if God leads you to someone who treats you better than you treat yourself, what else can you do but follow him?

To look at yourself and at the rest of creation at the same time, with no bias in either direction, is to place yourself under the Divine Name *al-Shāhid*, the Universal Witness. It is to see His signs both on the horizons and within your own soul (Q. 41:53). This is how that One who is better to you than you are to yourself, and also nearer to you than you are to yourself, sees things: impartially and completely, with no separation whatsoever between His Mercy and His Justice. And the guide who also sees things this way—insofar as this is possible to a human being—is a guide indeed. Those who have not found such a guide are limited to repenting of sins and performing good deeds. Those who, by God's will, have found such a guide will repent not of their sins but of their separate existence. They do not perform good deeds; rather, it is as if they *were* good deeds, deeds performed by God, acts of Mercy and of Bounty.

What and when is the Day of Judgment? It is the Day of "die before you are made to die" (prophetic *ḥadīth*), the Day when Truth comes and falsehood passes away (cf. Q. 17:81), the Day when Reality replaces conjecture. On that Day no soul will have power over another or tower over another like a mountain (cf. Q. 82.19). God will bring all things low so as to widen their breasts for Islām (cf. Q. 16:125). On that Day, the Day of the gray-haired children, the trust and innocence of childhood and the wisdom of old age will be one, because time will be no more. All things will be brought low on that Day, but not all things will consent to being brought low. That's why true *hearing* is dangerous: after the Word of God has been clearly spoken and clearly heard, the command to act on what one knows can no

longer be avoided. On that Day of Obliteration, whatever within your soul has not prostrated itself to God will burn.

## ḤADĪTH 22

God, the Most High, said: O you who believe! Remember God abundantly. O Moses son of Imran! O Master of clear expression! Listen to My Speech: In different ways, I am God, the King [and] Judge. There is no need of any interpreter between you and Me. Warn the one who devours usury (*ribā*), and the one who is ungrateful to his parents (*'āq al-walidayn*), of the wrath of the Most Compassionate (*al-Raḥmān*) and the flames (*nirān*) [of Hell]. O son of Adam! If you find that your heart has become hard and there is disease (*suqmān*) in your body (*badan*), and you are short of sustenance (*rizq*) then you should know that, verily, you have talked about things not of your concern. O son of Adam! Your religion will not be straightened until you straighten your tongue and your heart. And your heart will not be straightened unless you straighten your tongue. And your tongue will not be straightened unless you are humble towards your Lord. If you see the faults of people and do not see the faults in yourself, then, verily, you have pleased Satan and angered your Lord. O son of Adam! Your tongue is a lion. If you let it loose, it will destroy you. Your destruction is on the tip of your tongue.

## الحديث الثاني والعشرون

قالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: "يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّه ذِكْراً كثِيراً". يَا مُوسَى بْنَ عِمْرَانَ، يَا صَاحِبَ البَيَانِ، إسْمَعْ كَلامِي أَلْوَاناً أَلْوَاناً، إنِّي أنا اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الدَّيَّانُ، لَيْسَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ تُرْجُمَانٌ، بَشِّرْ آكِلَ الرِّبَا وَالْعَاقَّ لِوَالِدَيْهِ بِغَضَبِ الرَّحْمَنِ، وَمُقَطَّعَاتِ النِّيرَانِ. يَابْنَ آدَمَ إذَا وَجَدْتَ قَسَاوَةً فِي قَلْبِكَ، وَسقَماً فِي بَدَنِكَ، أَوْ حِرْمَاناً فِي رِزْقِكَ، فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّكَ تَكَلَّمْتَ فِيمَا لاَ يَعْنِيكَ. يا بْنَ آدَمَ لاَ يَسْتَقِيمُ دِينُكَ حَتَّى يَسْتَقِيمَ لِسَانُكَ وَقَلْبُكَ، وَلاَ يَسْتَقِيمُ قَلْبُكَ حَتَّى يَسْتَقِيمَ لِسَانُكَ، وَلاَ يَسْتَقِيمُ لِسَانُكَ حَتَّى تَسْتَحْيِيَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ، وإذا نَظَرْتَ إلَى عُيوبِ النَّاسِ وَنَسِيتَ عُيُوبَكَ، فَقَدْ أَرْضَيْتَ الشَّيْطانَ، وَأَغْضَبْتَ الرَّحْمنَ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ لِسَانُكَ أَسَدٌ إنْ أَطْلَقْتَهُ أَهْلَكَكَ، وَهَلاَكُكَ فِي طَرَفِ لِسَانِكَ.

Those who are eloquent, who are skilled in talking, are necessarily also skilled in listening. When they remember God, they are remembering the Source of all speech: the speech of the stars (which is their light) of the trees (which is the wind in their leaves) of the atoms (which is their vibration), and their own speech as well. To listen well to God is to hear yourself being spoken into existence instant-by-instant, in common with every other existing thing, large or small, that He has first conceived in the domain of His Secret, as *al-Khāliq*, the Creator; then shaped in the domain of His Power, as *al-Muṣawwir*, the Fashioner, then brought forth into this world as *al-Bārī*, the Producer. And if you can hear, without need for an interpreter, the Divine Speech that creates you—if you can hear it without ingrained mental habits and the laziness that enforces them—then you will always know what to say. You will be heard without any need for what you say to be converted into what other people expect to hear, without the hopeless attempt to translate your mental subjectivity into the mental subjectivity of somebody else. As an arrow penetrates the bull's-eye, so your words will find their mark—the Heart.

When God commanded Moses to relay His demands to the Pharaoh, he complained that he was not as glib and eloquent as his brother Aaron—until he accepted the truth that it was God's place to speak, and his to listen. It was through his ability to listen, like a sail listens to the wind, that Moses outstripped his brother Aaron in eloquence.

God never repeats Himself. "Every day doth some new work employ Him" (Q. 55:29). Each instant He speaks a new word and shows a different face: the face of that unique instant and no other.

The one who devours usury thinks that money creates itself, out of nothing. The one who is disrespectful to parents think that he has created himself, also out of nothing. He has forgotten that he owes all he is to God, and that respect for parents is one way of acknowledging that debt. The source of these illusions, this heedlessness, is the habit of talking to yourself, as if your narrow mind were the whole universe, as if your tongue were God.

If your Heart has become deaf to God's living speech, it can no longer receive sustenance from its Sustainer. When one's Heart is starving one's body becomes weak; when one's body becomes weak, one's life is in mortal jeopardy. The cause of this Heart-deafness is the wandering mind, its curiosity about things that do not concern it, things that cannot be correctly understood because they are outside the circle of the responsibilities of your station in life and God's will for you in that instant. To obey God's commands is to understand the situations in which those commands operate, but to pay attention to situations where obedience is impossible because no commands have been issued to you regarding them is to descend into illusion. If you listen to the words of creatures without knowing those creatures themselves as words of their Creator, your vigilance will be scattered to the four winds: how then can you remember God? You have abandoned Reality (*al-Ḥaqq*) and run after fantasy; you have rejected certainty and embraced conjecture. And one of the inevitable consequences of this state of affairs is backbiting and gossip. As you endlessly talk to yourself, creating unreal worlds, you invent imaginary enemies whose sins are as plain as day to you, while your own sins drop entirely out of sight. In the process of minding other people's business you have forgotten your own; you have forgotten God, so He has caused you to forget yourself (cf. Q. 59:19).

To talk about things that do not concern you is to wander beyond your proper world and the specific Name of God that rules it. Only that Name and no other can confront you with precisely what you need to repent of, and provide you with access to your Heart's desire. Those who are faithful enough to stay with the one Name to which God has assigned them will pass through it into all the Names. But those who betray that Name out of curiosity, or cowardice, or the idea that "the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence"—those who dream of Names that are not assigned to them, and who consequently talk about what does not concern them—are lost. Having forgotten themselves, they will also be forgotten by God (cf. Q. 59:19). And the central Name that we must never forget is *al-Nās*: Humanity. Satan's most cherished goal—one which is more apparent in our age than at any other—is to tempt us to

betray the Human Form, the *fitrah*; this is why the last surah of the Qur'ān, the surah *al-Nās*, teaches us to seek refuge in *the King of Mankind, the Lord of Mankind, the God of Mankind.*

The cure for hardness and deafness of Heart is as follows: First, humility, which is the willingness to obey God's commands, and then the inner silence that lets you hear those commands. If your will is obedient, if your mind silent and recollected, then the veil will drop from your Heart. This, however, is not a result that Iblīs likes to see. When God commanded him to bow down to Adam, he said to himself: "I, a creature of fire, will never bow down to a mere creature of clay; I reserve my *sujūd* (prostration) for God alone" (cf. Q. 7:11-12). He paid no attention to what God was saying to him because he was too busy listening to what he was saying to himself.

Destruction is on the tip of your tongue not just because "fire springs from the rubbing of sticks and war from the wagging of tongues," but because the one who relies on his own decree rather than the decree of God has cut the ground from under his own feet; he has built a wall of straw to keep out his enemies; to support himself, he leans against the wind. Speech is a Divine power. If we are foolish enough to claim ownership of it, it is as if we had kidnapped the son of a King and now find that our poor hideout—our subjective world of fantasies and impressions—is surrounded by the King's armies. As grain is devoured by moths, so the Heart closed to the Divine Speech is devoured by its own words.

## ḤADĪTH 23

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Verily, Satan is your open enemy. Therefore regard him as your enemy. Do good deeds for the Day on which you will be presented before Almighty God in groups. In front of God you will be lined up and you will read your book of deeds, word by word. You will be asked for what you have done openly and secretly. Then the pious will go to the Gardens [of Paradise] group by group and the criminals and evil-doers (*mujrimūn*) will go to Hell (*jahannam*) in groups, the Promises of God are sufficient for you. I am God and you should know me. I am the bestower of grace so thank Me. I am the Forgiver so seek forgiveness from Me. I am the Final Destination so turn to Me. I am the Knower of your Secrets so fear Me.

## الحديث الثالث والعشرون

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ! إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِيْنٌ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوّاً، فَاعْمَلُوا لِلْيَوْمِ الَّذِي تُحْشَرُوْنَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى فَوْجاً فَوْجاً، وَتَقِفُونَ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ صَفّاً صَفّاً، وَتَقْرَأُونَ الكِتَابَ حَرْفاً حَرْفاً، وَتُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ سِرّاً وَجَهْراً، ثُمَّ يُسَاقُ الْمُتَّقُونَ إِلَى الْجِنَانِ وَفْداً وَفْداً، وَالْمُجْرِمُونَ إِلَى جَهَنَّمَ وِرْداً وِرْداً، كَفَاكُمْ مِنَ اللَّه وَعْداً وَوَعِيداً، فَأَنَا اللَّهُ فَاعْرِفُونِي، وَأَنَا الْمُنْعِمُ فَاشْكُرُونِي، وَأَنَا الغَفَّارُ فَاسْتَغْفِرُونِي، وَأَنَا الْمَقْصُودُ فَاقْصِدُونِي، وَ أَنَا الْعَالِمُ بِالسَّرَائِرِ فَاحْذَرُونِي.

## COMMENTARY ON ḤADĪTH 23

Anyone—or nearly anyone—who believes in the reality of Satan will say "He is my certain enemy". Yet someone who places even the slightest degree of hope in the satisfaction of his or her passions has taken Satan as his friend—a pledge of friendship that the Evil One certainly does not reciprocate. (Likewise there are many who *believe* that they believe in God, but in reality do not.)

What does it mean that human beings will enter the Fire or the Garden in groups? Firstly, it indicates that there are different ranks and levels of both torment and bliss. Beyond this, it is a inescapable law that a given soul will attract to itself souls of similiar constitution, aim and destiny. The angry will attract anger to themselves in the form of others who are angry; the greedy will attract the greedy, the slothful attract the slothful, the envious attract the envious, the lustful attract those addicted to lust. What the *nafs al-ammara bi'l su* chooses, the world reinforces. Likewise what the Heart chooses, the Spirit of God confirms and increases. The just live in a world of Justice; the loving, in a world of Love; the perceptive and intelligent, in a world of Truth; the signs that God shows within the soul are reflected in the many mirrors He has placed on the world's horizons (cf. Q. 41:53).

God designed the Human Form to know Him; if we do not seek to know Him, we have betrayed the *Amanah*.

Anyone who is not grateful to God for His grace looks on his own existence as a curse.

Whoever expects to be forgiven by someone or something other than God would just as likely ask help from a star, or beg mercy from a stone, or worship and make sacrifices to the laws of statistical probability.

If all things, whichever way they turn, must return to Allah, then those who do not look in His direction might be described as walking time's road backwards, blind to where they place their steps. They are unable to avoid a single pitfall on the path, because they have missed the appointed rendezvous with their own life.

## ḤADĪTH 24

God, the Most High, said: God bears witness that there is no god but He and so do the angels and those full of learning. He is the upholder of justice. There is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise. "Verily, the true religion with God is Islām" [3:19]. Give glad tidings of the Garden [of Paradise] (*jannah*) to every benevolent person. And warn every sinful person that they are the perished, the losers. He who knows God and obeys his orders has attained salvation. He who knows Satan and disobeys him is safe. He who knows the truth and follows it is safe. He who knows falsehood and keeps away from it has succeeded. He who knows this world and rejects it has purified himself. He who knows the Hereafter (*ākhirah*) and seeks it has achieved it. Verily, "God guides whom he wills" (28:56) and "towards Him you will return" (29:21). O son of Adam! If God has ensured your sustenance, why are you so concerned? If My creation is My duty, so why are you stingy? And if Iblīs is an enemy to me, then why are you careless? If the [giving of] accounts (*ḥisāb*) and passing over the Bridge (*al-Ṣirat*) are true, then why do you collect wealth? And if God's punishment is true, so why do you disobey Me? And if the rewards of God, the Most High, in the Garden [of Paradise], are true, then why are you resting? And if everything is according to My decree (*qadarī*), so why lament? Lest you grieve for what you missed or rejoice at what you received [57:23].

## الحديث الرابع والعشرون

قالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: ۩"شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ وَالْمَلاَئِكَةُ وَأُولُوا الْعِلْمِ قَائِماً بِالْقِسْطِ"۩؛ ۩"لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ"۩، ۩"إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الإِسْلامُ"۩ بَشِّرْ كُلَّ مُحسِنٍ بِالْجَنَّةِ؛ وَكُلُّ مُسِيءٍ هَالِكٌ خَاسِرٌ، وَمَنْ عَرَفَ اللَّهَ فَأَطَاعَهُ نَجَا، وَمَنْ عَرَفَ الشَّيْطَانَ فَعَصَاهُ سَلِمَ، وَمَنْ عَرَفَ الْحقَّ فَاتَّبَعَهُ أَمِنَ، وَمَنْ عَرَفَ الْباطِلَ فَاتَّقَاهُ فَازَ، وَمَنْ عَرَفَ الدُّنْيا فَرَفَضَها خَلَصَ، وَمَنْ عَرَفَ الآخِرَةَ فَطَلَبَهَا وَصَلَ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُقْلَبُونَ، يَا بْنَ آدمَ، إِذَا كانَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى قَدْ تَكَفَّلَ لَكَ بِرِزْقِكَ فَطُولُ اهْتِمامِكَ لِماذا؟ وَإِذَا كانَ الخَلْقُ مِنِّي حَقّاً فَالْبُخْلُ لِمَاذَا؟ وَإِذا كَانَ إِبْلِيسُ عَدُوّاً لِي فَالْغَفْلَةُ لِماذا؟ وَإِذا كانَ الْحِسَابُ وَالْمُرُورُ عَلَى الصِّرَاطِ حَقّاً فَجَمْعُ الْمَالِ لِماذَا؟ وَإِنْ كَانَ عِقابُ اللَّهِ حقّاً فَالْمَعْصِيَةُ لِماذا؟ وَإِنْ كانَ ثَوابُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى فِي الْجَنَّةِ حَقّاً فَالاِسْتِرَاحَةُ لِمَاذَا؟ وَإِنْ كَانَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ بِقَضَائِي وَقَدَرِي فَالْجَزَعُ لِماذَا؟ ۩"لِكَيْ لا تَأْسَوْا عَلى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلاَ تَفْرَحُوا بِما آتَاكُمْ"۩.

## COMMENTARY ON ḤADĪTH 24

God testifies to his own Reality and Uniqueness by being the Real (*al-Ḥaqq*), the Unique (*al-Wāhid*), just as the sun testifies that it is indeed the sun by shedding its brilliance. What thing other than God could ever affirm God? What thing other than He could conceivably possess that authority? What creature would presume to certify its own Creator, seeing that He neither begets not is begotten, and there is absolutely nothing to which He could be compared? (cf. Q. 112:4).

Yet the pot testifies to the Potter, the angels to the One who sends them, and the Book to the Pen and the Hand that holds it—the Hand that writes all things in a single writing, both before they happen and *as* they happen. And those who know the meanings of the Book also testify to the One Who writes it, because they are present at the occasion of that writing, the moment when the verses of the Qur'ān are inscribed on their Hearts. They watch as the verses of it pass from Eternity into time—although, from another point of view, those verses never depart from that Eternity for even the twinkling of an eye. Who can deny that it is manifest Justice for those who testify to God to be affirmed by Him, and for those who deny God to be denied by Him, and for anything audacious enough to claim existence as a partner with God to be annihilated by Him? All things determine their own destiny by the quality of their relationship with the Source of their existence—a Source which embraces all the qualities of Its creatures and all Its relationships with them, and perfectly knows them, and eternally wills them. Thus the true religion is, precisely, *Islām*: submission to God as the very nature of things, including the nature of the one submitting.

If we are able know the real nature of Satan, of falsehood, and of the world, it is due to our intrinsic sense of the reality of God; our the innate knowledge of Him is the essence and *raison d'être* of the Human Form; this knowledge can be veiled, avoided, betrayed or forgotten, but it can never destroyed. We know who Satan is by watching what he rebels against; we know falsehood because there is such a thing as Truth; we know the world for what it is because God transcends the world.

And to know the next world is not only to be assured of it, but to have actually achieved it while you are still walking around in this world.

God is saying here that the quality of one's belief is testified to not by words, even if they are spoken in sincerity, but by actions: those who are lazy, or disobedient, or avaricious, or heedless, or miserly, or worried about the future testify that they do not really believe in Him in the same sense that they believe in this world, its goods, its dangers and its uncertainties. If God were a living reality to them they would be industrious (because all power to act comes from Him), obedient (because they know He is watching), vigilant (because those who know that Someone is watching them will have no difficulty in paying attention), generous (because they experience His Generosity), and trusting (because they have placed their existence in the hands of Certainty).

Those who accept God's decree do not grieve for what they missed because "what might have been" does not exist for them. They know God not as Possible Being but as Necessary Being, as that One in Whom all possibilities—including the possibility known as "myself"—are realized, and thereby known as necessities. By the same token they do not rejoice in good fortune as if it were a reality in itself, but accept it from God in the same way that they accept the inevitable limitations of life: with gratitude.

## ḤADĪTH 25

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Collect provision [by doing good deeds] more and more. Verily, the way is long, very long. Renew your ship for, verily, the ocean is indeed deep, deep. Lighten your weight for, verily, the path is thin, very thin. Purify your deeds for, verily, the examiner is All-Seeing. Delay your sleep for the grave and your pride for the scale. Delay your desire enjoyment until the Garden [of Paradise]. Delay your rest for the Hereafter. And delay your pleasures until you meet companions with big, beautiful eyes. Be for Me and I will be for you! Seek nearness to Me by lowering your estimation of this world. Keep away from the Fire [of Hell] by forsaking wicked people and by loving pious people (*abrār*). Verily, God will not waste the reward of the righteous (*muḥsinīn*).

## الحديث الخامس والعشرون

قالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَابْنَ آدَمَ أَكْثِرْ مِنَ الزَّادِ فَإِنَّ الطَّرِيقَ بَعِيدٌ بَعِيدٌ، وَجَدِّدِ السَّفِينَةَ فَإِنَّ البَحْرَ عَمِيقٌ عَمِيقٌ، وَخَفِّفِ الْحِمْلَ فَإِنَّ الصِّراطَ دقِيقٌ دَقِيقٌ، وَأَخْلِصِ الْعَمَلَ فَإِنَّ النَّاقِدَ بَصِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ، وَأَخِّرْ نَوْمَكَ إِلَى الْقَبْرِ، وَفَخْرَكَ إِلَى الْمِيزَانِ، وَشَهْوَتَكَ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ، وَرَاحَتَكَ إِلَى الآخِرَةِ، وَلَذَّتَكَ إِلَى الْحُورِ الْعِينِ، وَكُنْ لِي أَكُنْ لَكَ، وَتَقَرَّبْ إِلَيَّ باسْتِهانَةِ الدُّنيا، وَتَبَعَّدْ عَنِ النَّارِ بِبُغْضِ الفُجَّارِ وَحُبِّ الأَبْرَارِ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ.

## COMMENTARY ON ḤADĪTH 25

The provisions for your journey *to* God come *from* God. These provision, are you yourself, your own inherent qualities and predispositions—so spend yourself on the road, so that you may arrive in poverty at His threshold, the threshold of infinite Wealth.

Your ship for the crossing is the Heart; seal it and caulk it so that it none of the bitter water of the world can enter.

If you want to travel swiftly, travel light. Why burden your camels with dense, heavy treasures, seeing that the whole Treasure is already waiting for you at the journey's end?

Put off your sleep until the Day when all sleep is ended; do not collect a weight of pride that will make you light as a feather on the Scales when you are weighed against it; beware of enjoying anything in this world, even the most innocent of pleasures, outside God.

The grave is the threshold between this world and the Heart. Before you cross it, all pleasure is sin; once you have crossed it, all pleasure is blameless, because the Brides of Knowledge have now been unveiled. Satan wants to turn your self-denial into a denial of God; to act as a self-denying ascetic after you have entered the Garden of Paradise is to repudiate His gifts and insult and belittle the Beauty of His Countenance. How can you obey Him, how can you say you love Him, if you can take no pleasure in Him?

Those who know that God resides in their Hearts carry Paradise with them wherever they go; when you are afflicted with the sorrows of life, take refuge with them.

## ḤADĪTH 26

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! How can you disobey Me when you cannot even resist the hot sun and the extreme heat (*ramza'*)? Verily, Hell has seven levels in which there are fires which devour each other. In each level, there are seventy thousand valleys of fire. In each valley of fire, there are seventy thousand sections of fire. In each section of fire, there are seventy thousand cities of fire. In each city of fire, there are seventy thousand castles of fire. In each castle of fire, there are seventy thousand houses of fire. In each house of fire, there are seventy thousand rooms of fire. In each room of fire, there are seventy thousand wells of fire. In each well of fire, there are seventy thousand coffins of fire. In each coffin, there are seventy thousand trees of *zaqqūm*. Under each tree of *zaqqūm*, there are seventy thousand nails of fire. With each nail, there are seventy thousand chains of fire. And in each chain, there are seventy thousand serpents of fire. And the length of each serpent is seventy thousand yards. And in the stomach of each serpent there is an ocean of black poison in which there are seventy thousand scorpions of fire. And each scorpion has seventy thousand tails of fire. And the length of each tail is seventy thousand vertebras. And in each vertebra there are seventy thousand raṭls [each *raṭl*=449.28 grams] of red poison. [I swear] by My Self, by Mount Sinai and by the written book; by an outstretched fine parchment; by the house (Ka'bah) that is visited; by the elevated canopy, and by the swollen sea" [52:1-6]. O son of Adam! I have not created these fires [of Hell] but for the unbeliever (*kāfir*), and for the miser (*bakhīl*), and for the gossiper (*namām*), and for the one who disobeys his parents (*'āq*), and for the preventer of alms (*zakah*), and for the consumer of interest (*ribā*), and for the fo-rnicator and adulterer (*zānī*), and for the collector of the prohibited (*ḥarām*), and for the one who forgets the Qur'ān, and for the harmful neighbor. Except those who do repentance (*tawbah*), and acts upon good. O My servants! Bodies are so weak. The way is far. The burden is heavy. The path is thin. The fire is pure white flame. The caller is Israfīl. And the Judge is the Lord of the Worlds.

## الحديث السادس والعشرون

قالَ اللّهُ تَعالَى: يَا بَنِي آدَمَ! كَيفَ تَعْصُونِي وَأَنْتُمْ تَجْزَعُونَ مِنْ حَرِّ الشَّمْسِ وَالرَّمْضَاءِ؟ وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَهَا سَبْعُ طَبَقَاتٍ فِيهَا نِيرَانٌ تَأْكُلُ بَعْضُهَا بَعْضاً، وَفِي كُلِّ مِنْهَا سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ وَادٍ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَفِي كُلِّ وَادٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ شُعْبَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَفِي كُلِّ شُعْبَةٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَدِينَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَفِي كُلِّ مَدِينَةٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ قَصْرٍ مِنَ النَّارِ وَفِي كُلِّ قَصْرٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ دَارٍ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَفِي كُلِّ دَارٍ أَلْفَ بَيْتٍ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَفِي كُل بَيْتٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ بِئْرٍ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَفِي كُلِّ بِئْرٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ تَابُوتٍ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَفِي كُلِّ تَابُوتٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ شَجَرَةٍ مِنَ الزَّقُّومِ، وَتَحْتَ كُلِّ شَجَرَةٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ وَتَدٍ مِنَ النَّارِ، مَعَ كُلِّ وَتَدٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ سِلْسِلَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَفِي كُلِّ سِلْسِلَةٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ ثُعْبَانٍ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَطُولُ كُلِّ ثُعْبَانٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ ذِرَاعٍ، وَفِي جَوْفِ كُلِّ ثُعْبَانٍ بَحْرٌ مِنَ السُّمِّ الأَسْوَدِ، وَفِيهَا سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ عَقْرَبٍ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَلِكُلِّ عَقْرَبٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ ذَنَبٍ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَطُولُ كُلِّ ذَنَبٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ فَقَارَةٍ، فِي كُلِّ فَقَارَةٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ رِطْلٍ مِنَ السُّمِّ الأَحْمَرِ، فَبِنَفْسِي أَحْلِفُ؛ ۞"وَالطُّورِ وَكِتَابٍ مَسْطُورٍ فِي رَقٍّ مَنْشُورٍ وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ وَالسَّقْفِ الْمَرْفُوعِ وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ"۞ يَا بْنَ آدَمَ مَا خَلَقْتُ هَذِهِ النِّيرَانَ إِلاَّ لِكُلِّ كَافِرٍ وَبَخِيلٍ، وَنَمَّامٍ وَعَاقٍّ لِوَالِدَيْهِ، وَمَانِعِ الزَّكَاةِ وَآكِلِ الرِّبَا،

وَالزَّانِي وَجَامِعِ الْحَرَامِ، وَنَاسِي الْقُرْآنِ وَمُؤْذِي الْجِيرَانِ، إلاَّ مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحاً، فَارْحَمُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ يَا عَبِيدِي فَإِنَّ الأَبْدَانَ ضَعِيفَةٌ، وَالسَّفَرُ بَعِيدٌ، والْحِمْلُ ثَقِيلٌ وَالصِّرَاطُ دَقِيقٌ، وَالنَّارُ لَظَى، وَالْمُنَادِي إِسْرَافِيلُ، والقَاضِي رَبُّ الْعالَمِينَ.

In the face of seventy thousand times seventy thousand waves of destruction, why is the result not annihilation? After all this horror, what could remain?

What remains is the command *Be!*, (Q. 2:117), the question *Am I not your Lord?*, and the answer *Yea!* (Q. 7:172).

You were woven on the loom of the Names, and the Names never die; to disobey God is to disobey your very essence. Those who betray their essence have not thereby gained the power to annihilate it. They work for death, they call for death, they pray for death, but death does not find them (cf. Q. 25:14).

You called to the darkness, and the darkness came to you. You entered the darkness, and the darkness sang to you. You fell asleep in the darkness, and dreamed that you were God—then the real God appeared, in all His Wrath and His Majesty, and filled that dream with fire.

Souls are weak, the road is long, the path is thin as the edge of a sword-blade, the demand to repent of your very existence is heavy, to know that God is your only Essence and simultaneously to renounce all claim to it—this is not only difficult: it is inconceivable. It is necessary, it is commanded, it is the Single Thing That Is—but it is not possible to perform.

The black poison of ignorance ignites the red poison of rebellion; the one who did not want to obey, who did not want to know, is burned by the red and the black fire—But when Israfil calls—not to the body but to the soul—then the fire turns white. When the impossible occurs, it is revealed as the inevitable. In the Fire, in the Garden, or on the earth's dusty roads, no-one was destined to be you, O impoverished one, O thing incapable of being itself—but He! After accepting the *amānah*, after taking the name of Human Being, no other annihilation lay in store for you, neither death nor sleep—only the pure white flame.

## ḤADĪTH 27

God, the Most High, said: O you people! How could you be pleased with and attached to this world? Verily, it is perishable; its sustenance ephemeral, and its life broken. Verily, for the followers (*muṭī'īn*) there are Gardens (*jinān*) with eight gates. And in each garden there are seventy thousand gardens of saffron. In each garden there are seventy thousand cities of pearls and coral. In each city there are seventy thousand palaces of ruby. In each palace there are seventy thousand houses of aquamarine (*zabrajad*). In each house there are seventy thousand rooms made of gold (*dhahab*). In each house there are seventy thousand platforms made of silver (*fiḍḍah*). On each platform there are seventy thousand tables. On each table, there are seventy thousand plates of jewels. On each plate, there are seventy thousand types of food. And on each platform there are seventy thousand beds made of red gold. And on each bed there are seventy thousand covers made of silk and brocade. Around each bed, there are seventy thousand rivers flowing with the water of eternal life, milk, wine and the purest of honey. In each river, there are seventy thousand kinds of fruits. In the same manner, in each room, there are seventy thousand saffron-colored tents. In each tent there are seventy thousand carpets. On each carpet, there are seventy thousand companions with big beautiful eyes. With them there are seventy thousand mates as if they were eggs carefully guarded. And on top of each palace there are seventy thousand domes of camphor. In each dome there are seventy thousand gifts from the Merciful which have not been seen by any eyes, nor heard by any ears, nor conceived of by any human mind. And such fruits as they fancy and flesh of birds of which they are fond. There shall be companions like sheltered pearls: "A reward for what they used to do" [56: 23-24]. There shall be no death, no crying and no grief, no sadness, no aging, no worship and no fasting, no prayer and no sickness, no urination or defecation, no growth, no weariness, and none shall remove them. Thus the one who seeks My pleasure, seeks My house of Generosity and My closeness, should do so by giving charity (*ṣadaqah*), underestimating this world, and by being contented with little. I bear witness of Myself by Myself that there is no god but Me and that Jesus ('Īsā) and Ezra

(Uzayr) are two servants from among My servants and two prophets from among My prophets.

## الحديث السابع والعشرون

قالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كَيْفَ رَغِبْتُمْ وَرَضِيتُمْ في الدُّنْيَا فَإِنَّهَا فَانِيَةٌ، وَنَعِيمُهَا زَائِلَةٌ، وَحَيَاتُهَا مُنْقَطِعَةٌ، فَإِنَّ عِنْدِي لِلْمُطِيعِينَ الْجِنَانَ بِأَبْوَابِهَا الثَّمانِيَةِ، في كُلِّ جَنَّةٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ رَوْضَةٍ مِنَ الزَّعْفَرَانِ، وَكُلِّ رَوْضَةٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَدِينَةٍ مِنَ اللُّؤْلُؤِ وَالْمَرجَانِ، وَ في كُلِّ مَدِينَةٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ قَصْرٍ مِنَ اليَاقُوتِ، وَفِي كُلِّ قَصرٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ دَارٍ مِنَ الزَّبَرْجِدِ، وَفِي كُلِّ دَارٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ بَيْتٍ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ، وَفِي كُلِّ بَيْتٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ دُكَّانٍ مِنَ الفِضَّةِ، وَفِي كُلِّ دُكَّانٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَائِدَةٍ، وَعَلَى كُلِّ مَائِدَةٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ صَفْحَةٍ مِنَ الْجَوْهَرِ، وَفِي كُلِّ صَفْحَةٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ لَوْنٍ مِنَ الطَّعَامِ، وَعَلَى حَوْلِ كُلِّ دُكَّانٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ سَرِيرٍ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ الأَحْمَرِ، وَعَلَى كُلِّ سَرِيرٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ فِرَاشٍ مِنَ الْحَرِيرِ وَالدِّيبَاجِ وَالإِسْتَبْرَقِ، وَعَلَى حَوْلِ كُلِّ سَرِيرٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ نَهْرٍ مِنْ مَاءِ الْحَيَوَانِ وَاللَّبَنِ وَالْخَمْرِ وَالْعَسَلِ الْمُصَفَّى، وَفِي كُلِّ نَهْرٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ لَوْنٍ مِنَ الثِّمَارِ، وَكَذَلِكَ في كُلِّ بَيتٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ خَيْمَةٍ مِنَ الأُرْغُوَانِ، وَفِي كُلِّ خَيْمَةٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ فِرَاشٍ وَعَلَى كُلِّ فِرَاشٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ حَوْرَاءَ مِنَ الْحُورِ الْعِينِ، بَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ وَصِيفَةٍ كَأَنَّهُنَّ بَيْضٌ مَكْنُونٌ، وَعَلَى رَأْسِ كُلِّ قَصْرٍ مِنْ تِلْكَ الْقُصُورِ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ قُبَّةٍ مِنَ الْكَافُورِ، وَ في كُلِّ قُبَّةٍ سَبْعُونَ

أَلْفَ هَدِيَّةٍ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّتِي لاَ عَيْنٌ رَأَتْ وَلاَ أُذُنٌ سَمِعَتْ وَلاَ خَطَرَ عَلَى قَلْبِ بَشَرٍ؛ "وَفَاكِهَةٍ مِمَّا يَتَخَيَّرُونَ وَلَحْمِ طَيْرٍ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ وَحُورٌ عِينٌ كَأَمْثَالِ اللُّؤْلُؤِ الْمَكْنُونِ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ"، وَلاَ يَمُوتُونَ وَلاَ يَبْكُونَ، وَلاَ يَحْزَنُونَ وَلاَ يَهْرَمُونَ، وَلاَ يَتَعَبَّدُونَ وَلاَ يَصُومُونَ، وَلاَ يُصَلُّونَ وَلاَ يَمْرَضُونَ، وَلاَ يَبُولُونَ وَلاَ يَتَغَوَّطُونَ، وَلاَ يَنَمُونَ وَلاَ يَمَسَّهُمْ فِيهَا نَصَبٌ، وَمَا هُمْ مِنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِينَ، فَمَنْ طَلَبَ رِضَائِي وَدَارَ كَرَامَتِي وَجِوارِي فَلْيَطْلُبْهَا بِالصَّدَقَةِ، وَالاِسْتِهَانَةِ بِالدُّنْيَا، وَالْقَنَاعَةِ بِالْقَلِيلِ. شَهِدَتْ نَفْسِي أَنْ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ أَنَا، وَعِيسَى وَعُزَيْرٌ عَبْدَانِ مِنْ عِبَادِي، وَرَسُولاَنِ مِنْ رُسُلِي

How much of the spiritual life (it may sometimes be wondered) can be reduced to simple good taste? In the presence of a living peacock, or an eagle in its majesty and swiftness, who would choose to contemplate a dead rat? The world is deficient and without stable foundation—so it would be the better part of wisdom to cultivate a taste for Paradise.

He who says "not the Garden but the One who planted it!" will inherit the Garden.

He who says "neither the dye nor the spice but the Spice Merchant Himself!" his soul will be dyed the color of His Lord and he will taste His Lord.

He who says "not pearl, nor coral, nor ruby, nor aquamarine, nor gold, nor silver, but the Owner of them!" will inherit the First Intellect, and the inner secrets of Love, and the Universal Soul, and the angelic Serenity, and the power of the Veracity, and the outward and inward Purification, but not be delimited by them.

He who says "Not the tables, nor the platters, nor the jewels, nor the delicacies, but He Who is *al-Ghanī*, the Rich, and *al-Karīm*, the Generous!" will be fed on wisdom after wisdom, but never be burdened by them and never lay claim them.

He who says "Not the golden beds, nor the silks, nor the brocades, but the One Who reposes in His own flawless perfection!" will satisfy and be satisfied (cf. Q. 89:28). He will give Peace, and be Peace.

And he who brings no vessels to contain or possess or limit the current of the seventy- thousand rivers of water and wine and honey and milk that flow through the Garden will be moved and washed by the waves of Life, and of Love, and of Knowledge, and of the Primordial Human Nature, the waves of God's Good Pleasure, in Eternity, forever, balanced on the point of a needle. He will taste and swallow all the fruits of the Garden naturally and easily, as if hunger itself were satiety, as if he were simply breathing in the soft winds of spring. He will walk from carpet to carpet as from clime to clime; he will enter and repose in each saffron-colored tent, one after another, as if they were the tents of the ages. As their veils drop he will wed each wisdom; and in casques and nests and well-guarded inner chambers he will

attend to the seventy-thousand secrets of the Unseen Realm as they hatch. And beneath pungent domes of crystallized camphor he will inhale the sober and bracing fragrance of *ma'rifah Allāh*, the Knowledge of God, without the tying of knots, without the drawing of conclusions, without the veil of memory. His unique predilections, too, will subsist along with him—even these! Knowledge shall shine for him in the depths of the sea.

In the Walled Garden of the Mysteries, existence itself is prayer. Contemplation of God's Beauty is food and drink. The Heart fasts perpetually from growth and decay, from all the alterations of time, and never becomes hungry. As in the flow of music, as in the clear current of a river rushing past a white stone lodged in its bed, there is neither past nor future there—because past and future are based on comparisons, and Reality can be compared to nothing whatsoever (cf. Q. 112:4).

God's advice is: Do not ask after your eternal destiny, like Ezra did—this is not the key—but know that the dead will certainly be resurrected, as Jesus proved when he brought them back to life. The wealth of God is demonstrated by the poverty of the world; if you feed the poor out of your poverty, God will feed you out of His Abundance.

## ḤADĪTH 28

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Wealth is Mine and you are My servant. Nothing is yours except what you eat and digest and what you wear and turn into rags. Whatever charity you give you make it eternal. Whatever you gather does not benefit you and it becomes worthless. Whatever you save [excessively] is the cause of your own downfall. Verily, you are divided into three parts: one part is for Me, one part is for you, one part for me, one for you, and one between you and Me. The one which is for Me is your soul. The other one which is for you is your deeds. The third part which is between you and Me is supplications on your part and acceptance on My part. O son of Adam! Be humble so that you can know Me. Stay hungry so that you can see Me. Pray to Me so that you can find Me. Be alone so that you can reach Me. O son of Adam! If kings will be thrown into the Fire (of Hell) because of their injustice, and the Arabs for their tribalism, and scholars for their envy, the poor for their lies, traders for their betrayal, farmers for their ignorance, worshipers for their showing off, wealthy people for their pride, readers [of the Qur'ān] for their carelessness, dyers because of their fraud (*ghishsh*), preventors of alms (*zakah*) because of their prevention. Where, then, are the seekers of the Garden [of Paradise] (*jannah*)?

## الحديث الثامن والعشرون

قالَ اللّهُ تَعَالَى: يَابْنَ آدَمَ اَلْمَالُ مَالي وَأَنْتَ عَبْدِي، وَمَالَكَ إلاَّ مَا أَكَلْتَ فَأَفْنَيْتَ، وَمَا لَبِسْتَ فَأَبْلَيْتَ، وَمَا تَصَدَّقْتَ فَأَبْقَيْتَ، وَمَا ذَخَرْتَ فَحَظُّكَ مِنْهُ الْمَقْتُ، وَإِنَّمَا أَنْتَ عَلَى ثَلاَثَةِ أَقْسَامٍ: فَوَاحِدٌ لي، وَوَاحِدٌ لَكَ، وَوَاحِدٌ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ. فَأَمَّا الَّذِي لي فَرُوحُكَ، وَأَمَّا الَّذِي لَكَ فَعَمَلُكَ، وَأَمَّا الَّذِي بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ فَمِنْكَ الدُّعَاءُ وَمِنِّي الإِجَابَةُ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ تَوَرَّعْ تَعْرِفْنِي، وَتَجَوَّعْ تَرَنِي، وَاعْبُدْنِي تَجِدْنِي، وَتَفَرَّدْ تَصِلْنِي. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ إِذَا كَانَتِ الْمُلُوكُ تَدْخُلُ النَّارَ بِالْجَوْرِ، وَالْعَرَبُ بِالْعَصَبِيَّةِ، وَالْعلَمَاءُ بِالْحَسَدِ، وَالْفُقَرَاءُ بِالْكِذْبِ، وَالتُّجَارُ بِالْخِيَانَةِ، وَالْحُرَّاثُ بِالْجَهَالَةِ، وَالْعُبَّادُ بِالرِّيَاءِ، وَالأَغْنِيَاءُ بِالْكِبْرِ، وَالْقُرَّاءُ بِالْغَفْلَةِ، وَالصُّبَّاغُ بِالْغِشِّ، وَمَانِعُ الزَّكَاةِ بِمَنْعِ الزَّكَاةِ، فَأَيْنَ مَنْ يَطْلُبُ الْجَنَّةَ؟.

Earthly wealth, including our own bodies, is involved with birth, growth, decay and death, but God's wealth is eternal; this is the meaning of "everything is perishing but His Face" (Q. 28:88). How can we avail ourselves of the eternal wealth of God? Is there any way we can use our temporal wealth to purchase a portion of His eternal wealth? We can neither bargain with Him nor bribe Him; that much is certain; the Keeper of the Eternal Treasure-house has no need for our dead leaves and ashes. Our temporal wealth can only be eternalized if we give it away, but this is in no way a commercial transaction; it is not a case of buying God's good favor. Giving away our temporal goods opens us to the Eternal Good because when we part with something we have owned, we give away part of ourselves. Whatever we have identified with becomes an idol, and every idol cuts us off—or cuts off the specific part of ourselves that particular idol has taken possession of—from the Mercy and Bounty of God.

Your spirit, *al-rūḥ*, already belongs to God, always has and always will. Your deeds determine how well or poorly your individual self, *al-nafs*, conforms to and follows the lead of that spirit; the good you do you do only for yourself (cf. Q. 2:57; 17:7). But there is no way that your deeds, which are performed by *al-nafs*, can build a bridge to *al-rūḥ* by their own power, seeing that the *nafs* is in the grip of time and change, and the *Ruh* is held in the eternal hand of God. The only bridge between *al-nafs* and *al-rūḥ* is the bridge of your prayers and supplications, and God's Acceptance of them; the site of these prayers and supplications, and that Acceptance, is *al-qalb*, the Heart. What is the Heart? It is the spiritual center of the human psyche, the point of conscious attention of God; if we forget God, it is as if we had no Heart. This is the meaning of Q. 59:19, "They forgot Him, so He caused them to forget themselves."

On the other hand, those who forget themselves deliberately, in the sense of paying no attention to the demands of the *nafs* and the spectrum of idols and self-images it is always offering, will be able to pay attention to God. Those who have become free of self-generated identities, and therefore of the illusion that they have created themselves, will recognize their intrinsic need

for God—and those who never forget their need for Him will see Him. Prayer is not a random scattering of attention across all the sites and directions that God might conceivably occupy, but a homing-in on the One Site He actually does occupy in this moment; therefore to pray to Him is, in a sense, to already know Him. But in order to home in on that One Site, which is the Heart, you need to retire into solitude, like Muḥammad did, peace and blessings be upon him, in his cave on Mount Hira, deaf to the thousand voices of the *dunyā* and the million voices of the *nafs*. This solitude does not require *khalwa* (physical withdrawal or retreat), though *khalwa* can sometimes help us develop it, but it does require discretion, self-collectedness, freedom from gossip and curiosity and speculation, and the virtue known as "solitude-in-company." First you must learn to listen to no voice but that of God. Much later you might be given the ability to hear all voices as the Voice of God, but this faculty will never come to you unless you first understand how jealous He is of your attention, and how fearsome He can be to those who call on Him, and then lack the courtesy to pay close attention to what He says when He answers.

The major idols of the *nafs* that we must confront and overturn, with God's help, so as to let Him take possession of the Kaaba of the Heart, are injustice, bigotry, envy, lying, disloyalty, wilfull stupidity, vainglory, pride, heedlessness, fraud, and avarice—and these are not just vices, they are also identities. If we think of ourselves as great men, or Arabs of noble blood, or wise scholars, or aggrieved victims, or smoothe customers, or beasts of burden, or pious *mu'minīn*, or people who enjoy God's favor, or people with special skills, or people who know how to make a good impression, or people so cunning that they will never suffer a loss, then we are certainly not thinking of God; we are nothing but idolators. Anyone who develops or holds on to some idea of himself—*any* idea—while in the Presence of God (and when are we ever not in that Presence?)—it is as if he has raided his voice in drunken laughter in the audience-hall of the King.

## ḤADĪTH 29

God, the Most High, said: O you who believe! "Be careful of [your duty to] God with the care which is due to him, and do not die unless you are Muslims" [3:102]. O son of Adam! Deeds without knowledge are like thunder without rain. Knowledge without practice is like a tree without fruit. Knowledge without asceticism (*zuhd*) and fear (*khushu'*) is like wealth without alms (*zakah*), food without salt, and cultivation on rocks. Knowledge in the eyes of the insane is like pearls and rubies in the eyes of animals. Hardened hearts are like solid stones in water. Giving advice to one who is not willing to listen is like whistling in front of graves. Giving charity (*ṣadaqah*) from prohibited (*ḥarām*) wealth is like washing one's excrement in urine. Prayer without alms (*zakah*) is like body without soul. Deeds without repentance (*tawbah*) are like building without foundation. Do they feel secure from God's plans? "But none feels secure from God's plan except the people who shall perish" [7:99].

## الحديث التاسع والعشرون

قالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿"يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَ لاَ تَمُوتُنَّ إلاَّ وَأَنْتُمْ مُسلِمُونَ"﴾. يَابْنَ آدَمَ مَثَلُ الْعَمَلِ بِلاَ عِلْمٍ كَمَثَلِ الرَّعْدِ بِلاَ مَطَرٍ، وَمَثَلُ الْعِلْمِ بِلاَ عَمَلٍ كَمَثَلِ الشَّجَرِ بِلاَ ثَمَرٍ، وَمَثَلُ الْعِلْمِ بِلاَ زُهْدٍ وَخَشْيَةٍ كَالْمَالِ بِلاَ زَكاةٍ، وَالطَّعَامِ بِلاَ مِلْحٍ، وَكَزَرْعٍ عَلى الصَّفَا. وَمَثَلُ الْعِلْمِ عِنْدَ الْأَحْمَقِ كَمَثَلِ الدُّرِّ وَالْيَاقُوتِ عِنْدَ الْبَهِيمَةِ، وَمَثَلُ الْقُلُوبِ الْقَاسِيَةِ كَمَثَلِ الْحَجَرِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْمَاءِ، وَمَثَلُ الْمَوْعِظَةِ عِنْدَ مَنْ لاَ يَرْغَبُ فِيهَا كَمَثَلِ الْمِزْمَارِ عِنْدَ أَهْلِ الْقُبُورِ، وَمَثَلُ الصَّدَقَةِ بِالْحَرَامِ كَمَثَلِ مَنْ يَغْسِلُ الْعَذَرَةَ بِبَوْلِهِ، وَمَثَلُ الصَّلاةِ بِلاَ زَكاةِ الْمَالِ كَمَثَلِ الْجَسَدِ بِلاَ رُوحٍ، وَمَثَلُ الْعَمَلِ بِلاَ تَوْبَةٍ كَمَثَلِ الْبُنْيَانِ بِلاَ أَسَاسٍ.

﴿"أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللَّهِ فَلاَ يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إلاَّ الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ"﴾.

The Qur'ān tells us: "do not die except as Muslims" [Q. 3:102]; the inner meaning of this verse is: "You will not be able to die unless you become Muslims." We must pray to attain a state of submission to God before physical death overtakes us—and this submission is in itself a prayer for spiritual death.

The proof of knowledge is action; if you know something but do not act on it, then you do not really know it. Likewise the guide to action is knowledge; to act without knowing how or when or why to act cannot be called action, any more than a blind man stumbling over furniture in a dark room can be said to be performing useful labor.

Action for a definite object based on definite premises is incomplete action; the only complete action to submission to God; there is nothing it does not accomplish; there is nothing it does not embrace. When the will renounces its claims to independence, when it stops struggling and pushing and grabbing and allows God to act, the Eye of the Spiritual Heart opens. This is the true *ma'rifah Allāh*.

So-called spiritual Knowledge without the purification of the soul has no power to feed and nourish and enlighten the soul. It spoils easily, like food without salt; it cannot increase or be transmitted to others, like seeds sown on rocky ground; it remains theoretical, academic, and barren. Those antinomians who believe that spiritual Knowledge makes moral purity unnecessary are proved deficient in Knowledge by that very belief—and whatever true Knowledge they may have received, or attained, or stolen, will ultimately be withdrawn from them.

Sometimes God may send Knowledge to those who are not prepared for it; the result is madness. He does this to demonstrate both that spiritual Knowledge cannot be attained by human labor, and that human responsibility is necessary for us to withstand such Knowledge and put it to good use. Sometimes a madman may bring a true message from God so as to prove that God's words have the power to penetrate the madness of the world—but the next "message" that man transmits will be gibberish. Ibn al-'Arabī says: "Do not follow a shaykh who violates the *sharī'ah*"—which, in its widest sense, denotes the

practical wisdom that recognizes cause and effect—"even if he brings news from God." The mentally imbalanced person cannot understand the meaning of the truths that pass through him, any more than an animal can appreciate the value of pearls or rubies.

And just as water cannot dissolve a stone nor the dead answer a summons from the living, so the hearts of those addicted to abstract spiritual knowledge, or blind fanatical action, are dead. They can never remain faithful to the *amānah* because they believe they have already fulfilled it; "It is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts, which are within the bosoms, that grow blind" (Q. 22:46). Likewise those who seek a good through evil means or try to cultivate piety without generosity are defeating their own ends. To give charity out of the fruits of robbery or implore God's Mercy without extending it are like returning property to the one you have stolen it from in hopes of claiming the reward, or beating your servants and insulting your neighbors in order to demonstrate your kindness. And to expect to profit from good deeds without repentance for evil ones is like a hunter who hangs out his meat to dry in the same enclosure where he keeps his dogs. Fools like these will find no way to hide their foolishness, given that God does not judge by appearances but sees into the Heart. This is why complacency is very often the sign of a lost soul.

## ḤADĪTH 30

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! The more your heart longs for this world, the more My love leaves your heart. Verily, I will not let My love and love of this world join together in one heart. Devote yourself to My worship. Purify your deeds from showing-off until I dress you with the clothes of My love. Turn towards Me and be ready for My remembrance, I will remember you in front of My angels. O son of Adam! Remember Me with humbleness I will remember you with My blessings. Remember Me with struggle; I will remember you by watching [over you]. Remember Me on the surface of the earth, I will remember you under the earth (*taḥt al-arḍ*). Remember Me in bounties (*ni'mah*) and in good health (*siḥḥah*), I will remember you in hardship (*shaddah*) and loneliness (*waḥdah*). Remember Me with obedience (*ṭā'ah*), I will remember you with forgiveness (*maghfirah*). Remember me in humility, I will remember you as my servant. Remember Me in purity (*ṣaḥḥah*) and wealth, I will remember you in poverty and prosperity. Remember Me with sincerity and serenity, I will remember you among the angels of higher echelons (*mala' al-'alā*). Remember Me by being kind towards the poor. Remember Me in humility, I will remember you by honoring you (*takkarum*). Remember me through uttering (*talfiẓ*), I will remember you in politeness. Remember Me by abandoning this world (*dunyā*), I will remember you with the blessing of eternity (*na'īm al-baqā'*). Remember Me in extreme difficulties, I will remember you with complete and perfect salvation (*najāh*).

## الحديث الثلاثون

قالَ اللّهُ تعَالَى: يَا بْنَ آدَمَ بِقَدْرِ مَا يَمِيلُ قَلْبُكَ إِلَى الدُّنْيَا أُخْرِجُ مَحَبَّتِي عَنْ قَلْبِكَ، فَإِنِّي لاَ أَجْمَعُ حُبِّي وَحُبَّ الدُّنيا في قَلْبٍ وَاحِدٍ أَبداً. تَجَرَّدْ لِعِبَادَتِي وَأَخْلِصْ مِنَ الرِّيَاءِ عَمَلَكَ حَتَّى أُلبِسَكَ لِبَاسَ مَحَبَّتِي. أَقْبِلْ إِلَيَّ وَتَفَرَّغْ لِذِكْرِي أَذْكُرْكَ عِنْدَ مَلاَئِكَتِي. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ اُذْكُرْنِي تَذَلُّلا أَذْكُرْكَ تَفَضُّلاً، اُذْكُرْنِي بِمُجَاهَدَةٍ أَذْكُرْكَ بِمُشَاهَدَةٍ، اُذْكُرْنِي فَوْقَ الأَرْضِ أَذْكُرْكَ تَحْتَ الأَرْضِ، اُذْكُرْنِي في النِّعْمَةِ وَالصِّحَّةِ أَذْكُرْكَ فِي الشِّدَّةِ وَالْوَحْدَةِ، اُذْكُرْنِي بِالطَّاعَةِ أَذْكُرْكَ بِالْمَغْفِرَةِ، اُذْكُرْنِي بِالتَّضَرُّعِ أَذْكُرْكَ بِالْعُبُودِيَّةِ، اُذْكُرْنِي فِي الصِّحَّةِ وَالْغِنَاءِ أَذْكُرْكَ فِي الْفَقْرِ وَالْغِنَاءِ، اُذْكُرْنِي بِالصِّدْقِ وَالصَّفَاءِ أَذْكُرْكَ بِالْمَلإِ الأَعْلَى، اُذْكُرْنِي بِالإِحْسَانِ إِلَى الْفُقَرَاءِ. اُذْكُرْنِي بِالتَّضَرُّعِ أَذْكُرْكَ بِالتَّكَرُّمِ، اُذْكُرْنِي بِالتَّلَفُّظِ أَذْكُرْكَ بِالتَّلَطُّفِ، اُذْكُرْنِي بِتَرْكِ الدُّنْيَا أَذْكُرْكَ بِنَعِيمِ الْبَقَاءِ، اذْكُرْنِي فِي الشِّدَّةِ الْهَالِكَةِ أَذْكُرْكَ بِالنَّجَاةِ الْكَامِلَةِ.

## COMMENTARY ON ḤADĪTH 30

To long for the world is to make it a second God, which is something God's righteous jealousy will not permit. To see the world as composed of nothing but the signs of God, all pointing to Him as love's one true Object, is *ḥalāl*, whereas to see the world as an object separate from God, an object that deserves a portion of our love just as He does, is *ḥarām* because it is *shirk*. We must be alone and set apart from the world when we pray to God; only in this way can we begin to know Him as He is, which means: to know *that* He is, to know that if this world and all the worlds were destroyed, it would not alter Him in the slightest. Whoever knows God like this can see all things as His signs; whoever does not know Him like this can see only idols.

The identity we assume in order to appear acceptable to the world *is* the world; the garment that God clothes us in so as to make us ready to remember Him is the Cloak of Invisibility which the eyes of the world can never penetrate. No one can see beneath this cloak but the Spy of Hearts.

Remembrance of God in humility is vigilance.

Vigilance in struggle is Divine protection.

Those who avail themselves of God's protection in life will take it with them even to the grave.

Those who do not rely on the world's protection will be supported by God even in the midst of the temptations and flatteries of the world's most ephemeral goods.

Those who turn for support to God alone have thereby satisfied Him.

Those who remember themselves as *'abd* will be remembered by God as *khalīfah*.

Those who recognize no wealth equal to purity will retain their spiritual poverty even in the midst of the dangers of ease and prosperity.

Those who remember God with the spiritual tranquility He sends, with His *sakīnah*, have attained to an angelic nature.

Those who recognize that they can claim no honor by their own merit, and who honor the ones that the world sees as disreputable because these *fuqarā'* have refused to bow down and worship it, will be mirrors for the Honor that God reserves

for Himself alone.

Those who maintain discretion in speech because they know God is listening will be preserved from dishonoring themselves before Him by hateful gossip, useless chatter, and cunning lies.

Those who abandon the ever-dying will inherit the Ever-Living.

Those who recognize all trials and suffering as coming from God will find in them a Mercy that no attack by the world, the *nafs* or Satan can ever obscure.

## ḤADĪTH 31

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Remember Me. I will answer you. Call upon Me without carelessness. I will answer you without delay. Call upon Me with an empty heart, I will answer you by [raising you to] higher ranks. Call upon Me with honesty and piety (*taqwā*), I will answer you by rewarding you with the Garden [of Paradise] (*jannati al-mā'wā*). Call upon Me with fear and hope (*rajā'*), I will make all your affairs easy and successful (*farajān wa kharajān*). Call upon Me by My Exalted Names; I will meet your high demands. Call upon Me in this perishable and vanishing house, I will answer you in the house of reward and eternity. O son of Adam! How many times will you say *Allāh, Allāh,* while you have others but God in your heart? Your tongue remembers God yet you fear others but God and turn to others but God. If only you knew God you would not have given importance to anything besides God. You commit sins and yet you do not seek pardon from God? Verily, seeking pardon while constantly sinning is the repentance of liars (*tawbah al-kādhibīn*). "And God is not unjust to His Servants" [41:46].

## الحديث الواحد والثلاثون

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَا بْنَ آدَمَ أُذْكُرُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ، اُدْعُونِي بِلاَ غَفْلَةٍ، أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ بِلاَ مُهْلَةٍ، أُدْعُونِي بِالْقُلُوبِ الْخَالِيَةِ، أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ بِالدَّرَجَاتِ الْعَالِيَةِ، أُدْعُونِي بِالإِخْلاَصِ وَالتَّقْوَى، أَسْتَجِبْ بِجَنَّةِ الْمَأْوَى، أُدْعُونِي بِالْخَوْفِ وَالرَّجَاءِ، أَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ فَرَجاً وَمَخْرَجاً، اُدْعُونِي بِالأَسْمَاءِ الْعُلْيَا، أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ بِبُلُوغِ الْمَطَالِبِ الأَسْنَاءِ، أُدْعُونِي فِي دَارِ الْخَرَابِ وَالْفَنَاءِ، أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ فِي دَارِ الثَّوابِ وَالبَقَاءِ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ كَمْ تَقُولُ اللَّهَ اللَّهَ، وَفِي قَلْبِكَ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ، وَلِسانُكَ يَذْكُرُ اللَّهَ وتَخَافُ غَيْرَ اللَّهِ، وَتَرْجُو غَيْرَ اللَّهِ، وَلَوْ عَرَفْتَ اللَّهَ، لَمَا أَهَمَّكَ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ؛ وَتُذْنِبُ وَلاَ تَسْتَغْفِرُ، فَإِنَّ الاِسْتِغْفَارَ مَعَ الإِصْرَارِ تَوْبَةُ الكَاذِبِينَ، ﴿وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلاَّمٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ﴾.

Those who remember God will witness Him in the act of answering the prayers of all things by creating all things. And if it seems that He does not fulfill every need immediately, this is due only to our own heedlessness. "Before they ask," He says in the Book of Isaiah, "I will answer."

An empty heart is a heart that contains no desire or petition other than that God reveal His Presence, and is consequently without any barriers to that revelation—nor is there any elevation in rank other than the progressive deepening of one's sense of that Presence.

Honesty and piety are supremely beautiful, consequently their outcome is Beauty—a whole world of it.

Those who fear but never hope are in despair and darkness; those who hope but never fear are in fantasy and unreality. But God is Reality, *al-Haqq*, and therefore also "the Light of the heavens and the earth" (Q. 24:35); consequently those who unite hope with fear will see that Light and find that Reality. God says: "My Mercy has precedence over My Wrath" (Bukhārī), which means that we must not let obsessive fear of Him extinguish the light of hope in our Hearts. The true purpose of the fear of God is to help us maintain vigilance in the act of hope, so that it does not degenerate into mere wishful thinking.

The higher one's conception of God is, the more exalted one's desires will become; we must not approach a bounteous King with the hopes and expectations of a scavenger or a rag-picker. (See Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's story of Moses and the shepherd, *Mathnawī II*: 1720-1749.)

The Remembrance of God establishes the sense of Eternity in the midst of time and change. Only from the fixed standpoint of Eternity can the nature of time and the rhythm of change be accurately measured, and their true demands as willed by God be separated from their false temptations as proposed by the *nafs*.

God's Name is His real Presence; it is not a magic word that exists to compensate for our heedlessness of Him and shield us from its consequences. Those who do not *mean* "God" when they *say* "God" might just as well spend their time braying like an ass or cawing like a crow. Nor do those who have no fear of

heedlessness—even if they are shy of committing overt transgressions—really fear God. Someone who grants even the slightest importance to something other than God while in the felt Presence of God is like a person who stares fascinated at a line of ants on the ground while standing in the path of a cavalry column at full charge.

To seek God's pardon for your sins is to not to ask to be excused for them, but to pray for the power to stop committing them. To ask for anything less is to expect injustice from the Supremely Just One. If you ask Him to excuse your transgressions just so you can weasel out of them, how can you expect Him to defend you against those who treat you unjustly? If justice is not justice in every mode and in all circumstances, then it is not really justice.

## ḤADĪTH 32

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Your death (*ajlu*) laughs at your desires (*amal*). My decree (*qaḍā'ī*) laughs at your watchfulness. My destiny (*taqdīr*) laughs at your plans (*tadbīr*). My hereafter laughs at you world (*dunyā*). My fortune (*qismah*) laughs at your greed (*ḥirs*). Verily, your sustenance (*rizq*) is known and measured, written and stored. Therefore, rush towards death with your good deeds before death overtakes you for nobody is going to devour your sustenance (*rizq*). We have distributed among them their livelihood in the life of this world (43:32). This world is bitter for My servants but they love meeting Me and it is sweet for My enemies but they hate to meet me. O son of Adam! Death is going to befall you even if you hate (*kariht*) it. Have patience with your Lord's Command (*ḥukm*) for, verily, you are going to be raised [in the Herafter]. "Then declare the glory of your Lord and praise him while you are awake at night and declare glory of Him at the time when the stars disappear" [paraphrase of 40:55 and 50:39-40].

# الحديث الثاني والثلاثون

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَا بْنَ آدَمَ أَجَلُكَ يَضْحَكُ بِأَمَلِك، وَقَضَائِي يَضْحَكُ مِنْ حَذَرِك، وَتَقْدِيرِي يَضْحَكُ مِنْ تَدْبِيرِكَ، وَآخِرَتِي تَضْحَكُ مِنْ دُنْيَاك، وَقِسْمَتِي تَضْحَكُ مِنْ حِرْصِكَ، فَإِنَّ رِزْقَكَ مَوْزُونٌ مَعْرُوفٌ مَكْتُوبٌ مَخْزُونٌ، فَبَادِرِ لِلْمَوْتِ بِعَمَلِكَ الْخَيْرَ قَبْلَ الْمَوْتِ، فَإِنَّ رِزْقَكَ لاَ يَأْكُلُهُ غَيْرُكَ، ﴿"نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا"﴾ (43 :32). الدُّنْيَا مُرٌّ عَلى أَوْلِيَائِي لَكِنْ يُحِبُّونَ لِقَائِي، وَحُلْوٌ لأَعْدَائِي وَلَكِنْ يَكْرَهُونَ لِقَائِي. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ الْمَوْتُ نَازِلٌ بِكَ وَإِنْ كَرِهْتَ، وَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ مَبْعُوثٌ، فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ، وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَإِدْبَارَ النُّجُومِ.

Everyone pursues desires, but all desires are cut short by death—except what is desired by death itself. And what does death desire? Only to escape the Fire and enter the Garden. If during life you desire what death desires, then Israfil will not laugh at you at the moment of death; rather, you and he will laugh together at the foolishness of life, both at the moment of your death and at this present moment—which is also the moment of death, since the person who exhales a particular breath is not the same person as the one who drew it in.

Everyone is required to be watchful, but no matter how watchful you are in pursuing good fortune and avoiding bad fortune, what is already written in Eternity will be recited over time, line by line, and inevitably come to pass. So if you must be vigilant, reserve your vigilance not for your own good or bad fortune, unfolding moment by moment, but for God's wishes and commands to you, unfolding in those very same moments. Do not ask "what's going to happen next?" ask "what is required of me now?"

Everyone has to make plans; everyone is required to draw on memory in order to project this or that possible future. Memory, however, is deficient—and even if it were perfect, leaving nothing out, the future would still be uncertain. God, however, forms His plans not on the basis of time, but of Eternity—not on the basis of possibility, but of necessity—not in view of what might happen, but of what He has decreed.

God's plans are always successful; your own plans are always frustrated—except that part of them which coincides with God's plans, seeing that "God is the best of planners." (Q. 8:30). So it would appear that the wisest course of action is to avail yourself of God's plans. How can this be done? We avail ourselves of God's plans for us by submitting to His Will, both in this moment and, by anticipation, in all the moments to come. Actual submission, however, can only take place in the present moment while the intent to submit in the future must remain merely virtual. And submission in the present is also the best possible preparation for submission in the future, particularly since virtual submission in the future only becomes actual when

that future becomes present. Submission to God's Will in the present moment sweeps away the mental phantasms that our tendency to worry and plan and project outside of God's Will have allowed to accumulate. When these phantasms are dissolved, the Eye of the Heart opens. When the Eye of the Heart opens, we come into the presence of God's entire Will and Plan for us, past, present and future—after which our submission to God in the present moment becomes our submission to Him in the whole expanse of time—in the sum of all our life's occasions, seen from the standpoint of Eternity. We will not necessarily become consciously aware of God's entire plan for our lives when the Eye opens—though He may or may not show us certain elements of it, for His own purposes—but we *will* come fully into the entire presence of it, and that is what matters.

The Hereafter laughs at this world because it sees that the events of time foolishly think that they are happening *in* time, whereas they are actually happening in Eternity—which is to say, they have already happened. But still they scurry about like blindfolded circus performers, bumping into things; they do not even realize that everything has already happened! This is immensely funny to the eye of the Hereafter—the greatest clown performance ever produced.

It is equally funny to watch misers sweating to store up minutes and lock them away in vaults, as if they were using clay to try and patch extra arms and legs and eyes and ears onto themselves that keep falling off, and all the while the whole treasure of God's gift of time to them is sitting unguarded and open on a table behind their backs—but they never turn to look at it, they do not even know it is there. This is why puppet-shows are so funny—the children in the audience can see the strings, but the puppets, who take themselves so seriously, cannot.

Your evil deeds are committed in flight from death, but your good deeds embrace death. Your exact allotted treasure is measured out and stored up by God, and no one and no thing can take it away from you; once you have realized this, and accepted it, and submitted all your affairs to God, then you can spend both yourself and your time freely, and without fear. The moments that die in this world are raised again from death in the next world—so, even if it were possible to do so, there is no good

reason to hold on to them. To flee from death is to live in a world of death; to embrace death is to embrace the Ever-Living.

## ḤADĪTH 33

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! You desire and I desire but nothing happens except what I desire. He who tries to reach Me knows Me. He who knows Me wants Me. He who wants Me seeks Me. He who seeks Me finds Me. He who finds Me serves Me. He who serves Me remembers Me. He who remembers Me, I remember him with My mercy. O son of Adam! Your deeds are not going to be purified unless you taste four kinds of death: red death, yellow death, black death, and white death. Red death is tolerance of estrangement (*jafā'*) and abstaining from harming others (*al-adhā*). Yellow death is hunger (*juw'*) and hardship (*al-'asār*). Black death is to disobey one's lower self (*nafs*) and lust (*hawā*). Therefore, do not follow your evil desires (*hawā*) for they will take you away from the path (*sabīl*) of God. White death is hermitage (*'uzlah*).

## الحديث الثالث والثلاثون

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَا بْنَ آدَمَ تُرِيدُ وَأُرِيدُ، وَلاَ يَكُونُ إلاَّ ما أُرِيدُ، فَمَنْ قَصَدَنِي عَرَفَنِي، وَمَنْ عَرَفَنِي أَرَادَنِي، وَمَنْ أَرَادَنِي طَلَبَنِي، وَمَنْ طَلَبَنِي وَجَدَنِي، وَمَنْ وَجَدَنِي خَدَمَنِي، وَمَنْ خَدَمَني ذَكَرَنِي، وَمَنْ ذَكَرَنِي ذَكَرْتُهُ بِرَحْمَتِي. يَابْنَ آدَمَ لا يَخْلُصُ عَمَلُكَ حَتَّى تَذُوقَ أَرْبَعَ مَوْتَاتٍ: الْمَوتَ الأَحْمَرَ، وَالْمَوتَ الأَصْفَرَ، وَالْمَوتَ الأَسْوَدَ، وَالْمَوتَ الأَبْيَضَ. اَلْمَوْتُ الأَحْمَرُ احْتِمَالُ الْجَفَاءِ وَكَفُّ الأَذَى، وَالْمَوتُ الأَصْفَرُ الْجُوعُ وَالإِعْسَارُ، وَالْمَوتُ الأَسْوَدُ مُخَالَفَةُ النَّفْسِ وَالْهَوَى، فَلاَ تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، وَ الْمَوتُ الأَبْيَضُ الْعُزْلَةُ.

## COMMENTARY ON ḤADĪTH 33

If you desire to reach God, know that this is really God's desire, not yours—and whatever God desires, in fact transpires.

If you want God it means that you know Him, therefore you already possess Him. If you seek God you have already found him, because your seeking of God is really God's seeking of you, and whatever God seeks He has already found.

To be in the felt presence of God is to dedicate to Him every act you perform, automatically and effortlessly.

To act in submission to God is to make every action a remembrance of Him—and those who perpetually remember Him are flooded with His Mercy.

The doorway to this desire, this knowledge, this seeking, this finding, this dedication, this remembrance, and this Mercy is the fourfold death-of-self:

The red death is the mortification of self-will, of the desire to prevent things and people from living and moving on their own, and the closely-related desire to turn them into something other than what they are, as well as the attempt to control your own existence, as if you were to vow to consciously will every beat of your heart.

The yellow death is the mortification of the notion of personal power and self-sufficiency, and the realization that your only point of access to God is your need.

The black death is the mortification of your self-concept and of the belief that, since you have in effect created yourself, it is really you—not God—who possesses full rights over yourself.

The white death is the mortification of your identity in the eyes of the world. It is accomplished not by physically withdrawing from the world—seeing that "there is no monasticism in Islām" (prophetic *ḥadīth* recounted by *Majma' al- Bayān* and Ibn Kathīr)—but by dissolving your identification with the world, until you reach the station of "solitude in company."

## ḤADĪTH 34

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! My angels are watching you night and day so that they may write against you what you say and do, be it little or much. Verily, My firmament (*samā'*) bears witness to everything you see. The earth bears witness to every action of yours that you have done on its surface (*ẓahr*). The sun, the moon, and the stars are witnesses against you for whatever you say and do. I know very well what is hidden in your heart. Do not be negligent of yourself. Verily, death is your sole preoccupation, and slowly but surely, you will shortly be marching [towards death]. Whatever good or evil you have done will be accounted for without any addition or subtraction. You shall be paid back for everything that you did. O son of Adam! The lawful (*ḥalāl*) never comes to you but drop by drop (*qaṭratah qaṭrah*) and the unlawful (*ḥarām*) comes towards you like a flood. One who has cleansed his life (*'aīshuhu*) has cleansed his religion (*dīnuhu*).

## الحديث الرابع والثلاثون

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَابْنَ آدَمَ مَلاَئِكَتِي يَتَعَاقَبُونَ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لِيَكْتُبُوا عَلَيْكَ مَا تَقُولُ وَتَفْعَلُ، مِنْ قَلِيلِكَ وَكَثِيرِكَ؛ فَالسَّمَاءُ تَشْهَدُ بِما رَأَتْ مِنْكَ، وَالأَرْضُ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْكَ بِما عَمِلْتَ عَلى ظَهْرِهَا، وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُومُ يشْهَدْنَ عَلَيْكَ بِما تَقُولُ وَتَفْعَلُ، وَأَنَا مُطَّلِعٌ عَلى مَخْفِيَّاتِ خَطَرَاتِ قَلْبِكَ، وَلاَ تَغْفَلْ عَنْ نَفْسِكَ، فَإِنَّ لَكَ فِي الْمَوْتِ شُغْلٌ شَاغِلٌ، وَعَنْ قَلِيلٍ أَنْتَ راحلٌ، وَكُلُّ مَا قَدَّمْتَهُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَالشَّرِّ حاصِلٌ بِلاَ زِيَادَةٍ وَنُقْصانٍ، وَتَسْتَوفِي غَداً مَا كُنْتَ فَاعِلاً. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ إِنَّ الْحَلاَلَ لَيْسَ يَأْتِيكَ إِلاَّ قَطْرَةً قَطْرَةً، وَالْحَرَامُ يَأْتِيكَ كَالسَّيْلِ، فَمَنْ صَفَا عَيْشُهُ صَفَا دِينُهُ.

## COMMENTARY ON ḤADĪTH 34

To know that you are known is to know the Knower. If you see that you are seen by the Universal Witness, *al-Shāhid*, everything you see will appear to you as an Eye. Nothing is hidden. Nothing happens in darkness. There are no secret sins. And if there are secret virtues, it is because God has protected your goodness from being plundered by greed and envy of the world.

Whatever *you* do is all sin and transgression. And to think of yourself as the author of your virtues is worse—much worse—than to see yourself as the author of your sins. But in reality, no-one acts but God. The actions you recognize as His are keys to the Garden; the actions you claim for yourself are keys to the Fire. If God looks into your Heart and sees only you and your actions, He will cast you out of yourself. If He looks into your Heart and sees Himself, he will take up residence within that Heart.

Your sole occupation in life is death, which is the day-to-day exchange of your own thoughts and actions for God's Acts, God's Attributes, and God's Essence.

Your good actions will take you to God when they are recognized as His actions. Your evil actions will separate you from Him because they necessarily appear to be your own actions—and you will pay the price for every one of them, until the illusion that you are the author of any action whatsoever, whether good or evil, is totally burned away.

The flood of what is forbidden cannot pass through the eye of a needle, but what is lawful can pass through it, drop by drop. So shrink yourself till you are no bigger than a needle's-eye—and then pass through it.

## ḤADĪTH 35

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Do not be pleased with your wealth for it will not last forever. Do not fear poverty for it is neither inevitable nor is it a necessity do not become hopeless because of calamities (*balā'*) for, verily, gold is tested by fire. [Likewise], a believer (*mu'min*) is tested by calamities (*balā'*). Verily, the wealthy are honored (*'azīz*) in the world (*dunyā*) but disgraced in the Hereafter (*ākhirah*) whereas the poor (*faqīrīn*) are disgraced in the world but honored in the Hereafter. Verily, the Hereafter is eternal (*abqā*) and prosperous (*abhā*). O son of Adam! If you see your guest overstaying his welcome for more than nine days, you say: "I seek refuge from the Wrath of God (*ghaḍb Allāh*)." O son of Adam! Wealth is Mine, you are My servant, and the guest is My messenger. If you stop giving My wealth to My messenger Then do not desire My Garden and My sustenance. O son of Adam! Wealth is Mine, the rich are My representatives, and the poor are My dependents. The one who is stingy (*bakhīl*) towards My dependents I will make him enter into the Fire (of Hell) and I will not care for him! O son of Adam! Three things are incumbent upon you: alms (*zakah*), kindness towards relatives, and respect for guests. If you do not do what I have made incumbent upon you, verily, I will engulf you in fear and I will make you an example for all of humankind. O son of Adam! If you do not see your neighbor's right as you see your children's I will not see you, I will not accept your [good] deeds and I will not answer your supplications. O son of Adam! Do not be proud over likes of you. Verily, your beginning was a zygote (*nuṭfah*), impure, originating in semen (*manī*), expelled from where urine (*būl*) comes out: "from between the back and the ribs" [86:7]. O son of Adam! Remember the time in which you will stand before Me humiliated. "Verily, I comprehend [the secrets] that are in their hearts" [3:119]. And I know the innermost secrets of your hearts.

## الحديث الخامس والثلاثون

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَا بْنَ آدَمَ! لاَ تَفْرَحْ بِالْغِنَاءِ فَلَيْسَ بِمُخَلَّدٍ، وَلاَ تَجْزَعْ مِنَ الفَقْرِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ حَتْماً وَاجِباً. وَلاَ تَقْنَطْ بِالْبَلاءِ، فَإِنَّ الذَّهَبَ يُجَرَّبُ بِالنَّارِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُ يَجَرَّبُ بِالْبِلاءِ، فَإِنَّ الْغَنِيَّ عَزِيزٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَذَلِيلٌ فِي الآخِرَةِ، وَالْفَقِيرُ ذَلِيلٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَعَزِيزٌ فِي اْلآخِرَةِ. إِنَّ الآخِرَةَ أَبْقَى وَأَبْهَى. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ، إذا رَأَيْتَ الضَّعِيفَ عِنْدَك مَحْبُوساً أَكْثَرَ مِنْ تِسْعَةِ أَيَّامٍ فَقُلْ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِن غَضَبِ اللَّهِ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ، اَلْمَالُ مَالِي وَأَنْتَ عَبْدِي، وَالضَّيْفُ رَسُولِي، فَإِنْ مَنَعْتَ مَالِي مِنْ رَسُولِي، فَلاَ تَطْمَعْ فِي جَنَّتِي وَنِعْمَتِي. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ، اَلْمَالُ مَالِي، وَالأَغْنِياءُ وُكَلائِي، وَالْفُقَرَاءُ عِيَالِي، فَمَنْ بَخِلَ عَلى عِيَالِي أُدْخِلْهُ النّارَ وَلاَ أُبالي. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ، ثَلاثَةٌ وَاجِبَاتٌ عَلَيْكَ: زَكَاةُ مَالِكَ، وَصِلَةُ رَحِمِكَ، وَقِرَى ضَيْفِكَ، فَإذَا لَمْ تَفْعَلْ مَا أَوْجَبْتُهُ عَلَيْكَ، فَإِنِّي أُجْزِعُكَ إِجْزَاعاً، وَأَجْعَلُكَ نَكَالاً لِلْعَالَمِينَ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ إِذَا لَمْ تَرَ حَقَّ جَارِكَ، كَما تَرَى حَقَّ عِيَالِكَ، لَمْ أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ، وَلَمْ أَقْبَلْ عَمَلَكَ وَلَمْ أَسْتَجِبْ دُعَاءَكَ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ لاَ تَتَكَبَّرْ عَلى مِثْلِكَ، فَإِنَّ أَوَّلَكَ نُطْفَةٌ قَذِرَةٌ مِن مَنِيٍّ مُنْهَرَةٍ، مِنْ أَيِّ وَجْهٍ خَرَجْتَ؟ مِنْ مَخْرَجِ الْبَوْلِ مِن بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ، اذْكُرْ ذُلَّ مَوْقِفِكَ غداً بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ، فَإِنِّي لَمْ أَغْفُلْ مِن سَرَائِرِكَ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ، وَإِنِّي عَلِيمٌ بِذاتِ الصُّدُورِ.

## COMMENTARY ON ḤADĪTH 35

The true value of material wealth is its ability to keep the world at a distance and give you the kind of freedom from struggle and worry that will help you deepen your remembrance of God—but if you love it for itself, it will invite all the clamor of the world into your house, and destroy your peace.

The true value of material poverty is its power to confront you with your your need for God and consequently to put you in touch with His wealth; but material poverty has no value in itself.

The purpose of calamity is to overturn idols—idols like the love of wealth and the fear of poverty—idols like the belief that you have no need of God and the belief that God is either indifferent to your needs or actively desires your destruction. Whoever puts God first in his life, holding Him higher than all questions of wealth or poverty, God will cast the idols out of the Ka'bah of his Heart.

Those who have become host, in both their wealth and their poverty, to the wealth of God in this life, will enjoy an even greater share of that wealth in the life to come.

God will send you His wealth in the form of the *aḥwāl*, the spiritual states: these are the guests He expects you to feed, shelter and entertain. But if you let them overstay their welcome, this indicates that you have begun to worship God's guests instead of God Himself, and so turned them into idols; if you do this, you will certainly earn His wrath. When God sends us a messenger in the form of a state or insight or inspiration, the correct *adab* is to give our care and attention to that state as if it were an honored guest, not to appropriate its wealth and virtue so as to feed our own desires, ambitions and agendas. Those in the habit of robbing their guests will develop a bad reputation, and no more guests will arrive.

The proper use of spiritual wealth is not to build up a hoard of it for you to revel in, but rather to distribute it to those impoverished aspects of your soul that are really in need of it. Those who forget their need for God in the enjoyment of His gifts will quickly lose them.

God requires us to spend our spiritual wealth—our attention, our care, our love and our discernment—on three things: the

needy who are lower than us; our brothers and sisters who are equal to us; and those distinguished guests who are higher than us—that is to say, on those portions of our soul that have been wounded by the passions, in order to heal them; on those aspects of our lives that represent the *fitrah*, the human norm, in order to maintain them; and on those gifts of the Spirit that stand above us, so that we may be guided by them to higher spiritual stations (*maqamāt*), and so draw nearer to God. If any one of these three requirements is neglected, the other two will suffer as well.

Lastly, if the one who has fed the poor, the relatives and the guests begins to take pride in his fulfillment of these duties, forgetting that he has done no more than fulfill the same requirements that God has laid on all the *mu'minīn*, he will be reminded in the most shocking terms that, in his own essence, he is nothing; that is when the gifts of God he has turned into idols in the corruption of his Heart will be exposed before the Eye of God, and the eyes of His saints and His angels and His prophets, as vile matter.

And if God knows the innermost Secret of your Heart, it is because He *is* that Secret.

## ḤADĪTH 36

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Be generous (*sakhiyyān*). Verily, generosity is the product of pure certainty (*ḥusn al-yaqīn*). Certainty is part of faith (*īmān*) and faith is from the Garden [of Paradise] (*jannah*). O son of Adam! Beware of miserliness (*bukhl*)! Verily, miserliness is from disbelief (*kufr*) and disbelief is from the Fire [of Hell] (*al-nār*). O son of Adam! Beware of the supplications (*da'wah*) of the unjustly treated! Because nothing can prevent them from reaching Me. Were it not for the fact that I love grace (*al-ṣafḥa*) and forgiveness (*al-maghfirah*), I would not have put Adam in trying tests of wrong-doing (*dhanb*), and then sent him back to the Garden [of Paradise] (*jannah*). O son of Adam! If I did not love forgiveness I would not test anyone by means of sin. O son of Adam! I gave you faith (*īmān*) and knowledge (*ma'rifah*) without your supplication. Then how can I be stingy (*abkhalu*) towards you with the Garden (of Paradise) (*jannah*) and forgiveness (*maghfirah*) while you ask and cry for it? O son of Adam! If My servant holds fast unto Me, I will guide him. If he trusts and turns (*tawwakala*) to Me I will make him sufficient. If he turns to and trusts (*tawwakala*) other than Me I will cut from him the bounties (*asbāb*) from the heavens (*samawāti*) and the earth (*arḍ*). O son of Adam! Do not miss the morning prayers (*ṣalat al-ẓuhā*) for everything on which the sun shines will pray (*yad'aū*) for the one who performs it. O son of Adam! You have lost My command (*amr*) and you are ready to commit sins. Who, then, will protect you from My punishment (*'adhābī*) on the Day of Judgment?

## الحديث السادس والثلاثون

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَا بْنَ آدَمَ كُنْ سَخِيّاً فَإِنَّ السَّخَاءَ مِنْ حُسْنِ الْيَقِينِ. وَالْيَقِينُ مِنَ الإِيمانِ وَالإِيمَانُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ إِيَّاكَ وَالْبُخْلَ، فَإِنَّ الْبُخْلَ مِنَ الكُفْرِ، وَالْكُفْرُ مِنَ النَّارِ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ اتَّقُوا مِنْ دَعْوَةِ الْمَظْلومِينَ، فَإِنَّهَا لاَ يَحْجُبُها عَنِّي شَيْءٌ. وَلَوْلاَ أَنِّي أُحِبُّ الصَّفْحَ وَالْمَغْفِرَةَ، لَمَا ابْتَلَيْتُ آدَمَ بِالذَّنْبِ ثُمَّ رَدَدْتُهُ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ لَوْلاَ أَنَّ العَفْوَ أَحَبُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدِي، لَمَا ابتَلَيْتُ أَحَداً بِالذَّنْبِ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ أَعْطَيْتُكَ الإِيمانَ وَالْمَعْرِفَةَ عَنْ غَيْرِ سُؤالٍ وَتَضَرُّعٍ، فَكَيْفَ أَبْخَلُ عَلَيْكَ بِالْجَنَّةِ وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ مَعَ سُؤَالِكَ وَتَضَرُّعِكَ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ إِذَا اعْتَصَمَ لي عَبْدٌ هَدَيْتُهُ، وَإِذا تَوَكَّلَ عَلَيَّ كَفَيْتُهُ، وَإِذَا تَوَكَّلَ على غَيْرِي قَطَعْتُهُ أَسْبابَ السَّمَواتِ وَالأَرْضِ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ لاَ تَدَعْ صَلاَةَ الضُّحَى فَإِنَّ لِمُصَلِّيهَا يَدْعُو مَا طَلَعَتْ عَلَيْهِ الشَّمْسُ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ ضَيَّعْتَ أَمْرِي، وَرَكِبْتَ مَعْصِيَتِي، فَمَنِ الَّذي يَمْنَعُكَ مِنْ عَذَابِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ؟.

## COMMENTARY ON ḤADĪTH 36

Generosity is the pre-condition of all that exists because existence itself is a gift of God. The very fact that ants, and trees, and rocks, and stars, and human beings, and the earth, and the heavens continue to exist is proof that this Generosity is still being poured out; that much is certain. In the midst of the Bounty of God flooding the universe like the light of the sun floods the day, how can the miser, the one whose avarice is wedded to the sense of insufficiency, claim to believe in Him or understand the terms of any sort of existence, including his own? Only those who have turned aside from existence and cut themselves off from Reality, and then attempted to reproduce that existence and that Reality, by their own efforts, inside their own egos—thereby turning their souls into iron cells filled with fire—could ever even remotely entertain the idea that miserliness is either desirable or necessary.

In the words of Imām ʿAlī from the *Nahj al-Balāghah* of Sayyid Raḍī, "Beware of oppressing someone with no defense against you except God." If you place yourself between someone in need and the Bounty that God has destined for him, that Bounty will roll over you like a tank. Even the sufferings of this world are in service to that Bounty. The overthrow of idols and the widening of the human breast for Islām (cf. Q. 16:125) require suffering, but the twin brother of that purifying suffering is God's grace and forgiveness (Q. 94:5). The earth and all its sufferings was spread out for Adam only as a Divine act of Mercy and Generosity, so as to prevent him from entirely forgetting the Garden, and so falling into the Fire.

God has already showered upon us the Generosity of existence, and seconded and completed that Generosity with the spiritual seed, which is Faith, and the fruit of that seed, which is Knowledge. How do we know this? Because without these two we would have neither sufficient Faith to beg for forgiveness, nor sufficient Knowledge and vision to long for Paradise.

Whoever recognizes God as the Source of all Bounty, and turns to Him, will receive as well the bounty of Heaven, which is Knowledge, and the bounty of Earth, which is Submission—but the one who tries to grasp the bounty of Heaven without

Submission, or the bounty of Earth without Knowledge, will lose both the Earth and the Heaven, both stability of character and elevation of spirit.

Those who pray in anticipation of the rising of the sun, which is the Eye of the Heart, will receive Knowledge from everything that Eye gazes upon after it opens, everything on Earth or in Heaven, in this world and the next. But as for the one who loses his Submission because he takes pride in his Knowledge, that very Knowledge will testify against him on the Day of Judgment.

## ḤADĪTH 37

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Behave with the people with good manners until (*ḥattā*) I love you. I will put your love in the hearts of the righteous (*sāliḥīn*) and I will forgive your sins (*dhanb*). O son of Adam! Put your hands on your head. Whatever you wish for yourself, wish the same for other Muslims. O son of Adam! Do not be grieved over what you lost in this world (*dunyā*). Do not be happy with what you gain from this world (*dunyā*). Verily, this world may be yours today but tomorrow it will be for others. O son of Adam! Seek the Hereafter (*ākhirah*) and leave this world (*dunyā*) for, verily, an atom of the Hereafter is better for you than this world and all it contains. O son of Adam! You are asking for the world and the Hereater is asking for you. Be ready for death before it comes to you! If I left this world to any of My servants I would have left it to My prophets so they would call My servants to My obedience. O son of Adam! How many wealthy people have been made poor by death? How many laughing people have cried because of death? How many servants (*'abd*) are those upon whom I have bestowed this world (*dunyā*), but they exceeded all limits and left My obedience, until death over took them and put them into the Fire [of Hell]. And how many servants lived a frugal life in this world, were patient [in hardship], died, and entered into the Garden [of Paradise].

## الحديث السابع والثلاثون

قالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَا بْنَ آدَمَ! أَحْسِنْ خُلُقَكَ مَعَ النَّاسِ، حَتَّى أُحِبَّكَ، وَحَبَّبْتُكَ في قُلُوبِ الصَّالِحِينَ، وَغَفَرْتُ ذَنْبَكَ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ، ضَعْ يَدَكَ عَلى رَأْسِكَ، فَما تُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِكَ فَأَحْبِبْ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ، لاَ تَحْزَنْ عَلى مَا فَاتَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا، وَلاَ تَفْرَحْ بِما أُوتِيتَ مِنْهَا، فَإِنَّ الدُّنْيَا الْيَوْمَ لَكَ وَغَداً لِغَيْرِكَ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ، اُطْلُبِ الآخِرَةَ وَدَعِ الدُّنْيَا، فَإِنَّ ذَرَّةً مِنَ الآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ، أَنْتَ في طَلَبِ الدُّنْيَا، وَالآخِرَةُ في طَلَبِكَ، وَلَوْ تَرَكْتُ الدُّنْيَا لأَحَدٍ مِنْ عِبَادِي، لَتَرَكْتُهَا لِلأَنْبِيَاءِ، حَتَّى يَدْعُوا عِبَادِي إِلَى طَاعَتِي. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ، كَمْ مِنْ غَنِيٍّ قَدْ جَعَلَهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقِيراً، وَكَمْ مِنْ ضَاحِكٍ قَدْ صَارَ بَاكِياً بِالْمَوْتِ؟ وَكَمْ مِنْ عَبْدٍ بَسَطْتُ لَهُ الدُّنْيَا فَطَغَى، وَتَرَكَ طَاعَتِي حَتَّى مَاتَ عَلَيْهِ، وَدَخَلَ النَّارَ. وَكَمْ مِنْ عَبْدٍ قَتَّرْتُ عَلَيْهِ الدُّنْيَا فَصَبَرَ وَمَاتَ وَدَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ.

The essence of true *adab* among human beings is the recognition that God is equally present in the Hearts of all, though there is a great disparity when it comes to how well or poorly a given soul intuits, perceives and realizes this Presence—a disparity so great that it even determines which souls will inherit the Garden and which inherit the Fire. Nonetheless, the potential dignity of each human person is equal to that of every other, seeing that all possess the *fiṭrah* and all have assumed the *amānah;* and this remains true whether they have stayed faithful to that Presence, or whether, conversely, they have forgotten, denied and betrayed it. To wish the Fire for those you believe have betrayed God is to participate in that betrayal, since it is in fact a rebellious attempt to take the right of judgment out of God's hands. But to respect the *fiṭrah* within them, even if they have corrupted it, is to invoke the Wrath of God against them, since it is precisely your respect for what is potentially best in them that has the power to confront them with their betrayal of it.

To love God in the Hearts of your fellow human beings is to draw near to God in your own Heart; to treat all people with righteousness will certainly earn you the love of the righteous. And to see God in the Hearts of even the greatest of hypocrites and transgressors is to make both God's forgiveness and God's wrath present to them, while leaving the question of which of the two they will choose to avail themselves of entirely up to them. To forgive is to renounce all intent to force someone who has oppressed or offended you to pay their debt, in the realization that they have not really gone into debt to you, but only to themselves (cf. Q. 2:57). It is to renounce even the most seemingly righteous anger against evildoers, because to become angry with those who have incurred God's Wrath is to begin to indentify with that Wrath, to the point where you may find yourself standing on the path between those miscreants and the Wrath they have earned—and this may in fact delay its arrival. Furthermore, and if you are still standing in the middle of that path by the time the Wrath destined for them actually does arrive it will mow you down on the way to its target. On the other

hand, those who forgive will place themselves not in the path of Wrath but in the path of Mercy—which certainly does *not* include the arrogant and foolish attempt to turn God's Wrath aside from another. You may have the power to protect someone from yourself, but in no way do you have the power to protect another person from God.

To try to impose the same taste or sensibility or predeliction or psychological quality on another person that you wish for yourself will put you in conflict with the unique character and destiny implanted in that person by God, as well as turning your sense of your own special character into an idol. But to wish the same *spiritual* good for another that you sincerely aspire to for yourself is to draw closer to that good, since to possessively identify a Divine Quality with yourself alone is to distance yourself from it, whereas to see the potential for it everywhere is part of "wherever you turn, there is the Face of God" (Q. 2:115).

To place your hopes and fears on an ever-changing object that will inevitably be taken away from you is obviously not a wise course of action. On the other hand, to truly fear an eternal loss is to completely reject it, while to sincerely hope for an eternal good is to fully embrace it. To forget the *dunyā* and concentrate on the *ākhirah* is to let go of the uncertain influence of Possibility, and take hold of the firm truth of Necessity.

The more closely you attend to the Next World, the more This World will serve you—but if you choose to serve This World, the Next World will depart from you (and This World will eventually abandon you as well). The Possible serves the Necessary because Necessity is what leads Possibility to its realization—but what does the Necessary and Certain need with the merely Possible? Those who serve This World have put off the Next World until the day of their death; they have paid no attention to it, consequently they are unprepared for it. But those who serve the Next World are bringing it forward, every day, into the midst of This World; behind the ephemeral play of possibilities they have begun to discern the Divine Names and Attributes, those qualities that God *must* possess if He is to be God indeed. The eternity of the Next World is the substance and stability of This World, but This World in itself, in its flightiness and uncertainty, is "like thickly-scattered moths" (Q. 101:4). It is

without inherent substance; not even the Prophets can inherit it. It has no effect on the Next World, which is why that World has already forgotten it. If you try to bulid a house upon it, it becomes like a bushel of chaff; when you lift it to your shoulders and try to carry it away, it becomes like a heavy block of lead. It is always either crushing you or crumbling underneath you; that so many people still find it attractive is the darkest sorcery of the *nafs*. Nonetheless the Scales of the Next World can correctly evaluate it, and the "Light of the heavens and the earth" (Q. 24:35) can dispel it completely. It will certainly be dispelled in any case on the day or your death, so the best course would be to dispel it now by dying before you are made to die; intentional death in the way of God is a treasure that can never be taken away from you.

## ḤADĪTH 38

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! If you wake up every day between two great bounties (*ni'matayn*), you do not know which one is greatest for you: your sins which are hidden from the eyes of the people or the good words (*thanā'u*) from people about you. If people knew what I know about you not a single being from my creation would greet you. Purify your deeds from showing off (*al-riyā'*) and expecting [a good] reputation. Verily, you are a humble servant (*'abd dhalīl*) of the Glorious Lord (*rabb jalīl*) and you are commanded to obey him. Increase your provisions! Verily, you are a traveler (*musāfir*)! Every traveler needs to bring provisions. O son of Adam! My treasures will never be exhausted. My right hand is open for gifts forever. By My decree (*qadr*) whatever you spend, I will give that much back to you. By My decree (*qadr*) whatever you cease to spend, I will cease to give bounties to you. O son of Adam! Fear of poverty shows distrust of God, the Most High. As a result of shortage of certainty you are stingy towards the poor (*masākīn*). O son of Adam! Those who grieve about their sustenance they have doubted My book and have not acknowledged My prophets. Verily, they have rejected My lordship (*rubūbiyyatī*). And the one who has rejected My lordship I will cast him into the Fire [of Hell] on his face.

## الحديث الثامن والثلاثون

قالَ اللّهُ تَعالَى: يَا بْنَ آدَم إذا أصْبَحْتَ بَيْنَ نِعْمَتَيْنِ عَظِيمَتَيْنِ، لاَ تَدْرِي أيَّهُمَا أعْظَمُ عِنْدَكَ: ذُنُوبُكَ إلاَّ المَسْتُورَةَ عَنِ النَّاسِ، أوِ الثَّنَاءُ الْحَسَنُ مِنَ النَّاسِ. وَلَوْ عَلِمَ النَّاسُ مَا أعْلَمُ مِنْكَ، مَا سَلَّمَ عَلَيْكَ أحَدٌ مِنْ خَلْقِي. وَأخْلِصْ عَمَلَكَ مِنَ الرِّيَاءِ وَالسُّمْعَةِ، فَإنَّكَ عَبْدٌ ذَلِيلٌ لِرَبٍّ جَلِيلٍ، مَأمُورٌ لأمْرِهِ، وَتَزَوَّدْ فَإنَّكَ مُسَافِرٌ وَلاَ بُدَّ مِنَ الزَّادِ لِكُلِّ مُسَافِرٍ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ خَزَائِنِي لا تَنْفَدُ أبَداً، وَيَمِينِي مَبْسُوطَةٌ بِالْعَطَايَا أبَداً، وَبِقَدْرِ مَا تُنْفِقُ أُنْفِقُ عَلَيْكَ، وَبِقَدْرِ مَا تُمْسِكُ أُمْسِكُ عَلَيْكَ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ خَوْفُ الْفَقْرِ سُوءُ الظَّنِّ بِاللَّهِ تَعَالَى، وَمِنْ قِلَّةِ الْيَقِينِ، تَبْخَلُ عَلى الْمَسَاكِينِ. يَابْنَ آدَمَ مَنْ أهَمَّ لِلرِّزْقِ فَقَدْ شَكَّ فِي كِتَابِي، وَمَنْ لَمْ يُصَدِّقْ أنْبِيائِي، فَقَدْ جَحَدَ رُبُوبِيَّتِي، وَمَنْ جَحَدَ رُبُوبِيَّتِي، أكْبَبْتُهُ فِي النَّارِ عَلى وَجْهِهِ.

How can those who are dominated by the *nafs*, just like you are, evaluate you correctly? And why does their good opinion matter to you? If they are worthy to judge you they must be wiser and more virtuous than you are—so why do you expect them to approve of you? And if they are equal to you in virtue, what approval can they offer you that you cannot just as well offer yourself, without the shame and inconvenience of begging for your good reputation from door to door? In worldly terms, a reputation is nothing if it does not exceed the norm; but there is no way your peers can provide you with it, since no-one can recognize the existence and quality of a good that lies beyond their horizon. This leaves only your moral and intellectual inferiors to set you up as an idol in your own eyes—but what can the adulation of the riff-raff and the low-life do for you except dragging you down to their level?

No-one can judge you truthfully except God, who is both *al-'Adil*, the Just Judge, and *al-Raḥmān*, the All-Merciful—and if He were to judge you without also showing Mercy to you, you would inevitably be lost (Q. 16:61). He would find no good in you, since the only good that is possible to you as a creature and a servant is your willingness to accept His Mercy. Whatever good the Just Judge may find in you will be a reflection of Himself. To seek good from other people and from the *dunyā* is to go into debt to them—and if you have no source of income outside of those you are in debt to, how can that debt be repaid? But to realize that the world itself is in debt, that it is composed of nothing *but* debt, will (*inshā' Allāh*) make you willing to accept God's Mercy. That Mercy is the sole provision for your journey to the All-Merciful—so breathe it in, breath by breath, with every breath you take. And as you breathe in Mercy, breathe out the musty residues of self-image, and greed, and empty memory. *Sigh* them out of you, exhale, expire—till only Mercy is left. If you refuse to exhale, how can you breathe? If you refuse to spend of yourself, how can you receive more out of God's Bounty? You have left no room for it.

If you really saw this universe as a single unbroken outpouring of that Bounty, how could you ever fear poverty? If you once realized how rich you are in God, rich by your very

existence, which is a greater treasure than any you could scrape together and heap up and lock away because it is drawn directly from His Existence, your degree of wealth would be so massive that it would actually be painful for you to hold it back, until you could find relief through generosity to those in need. This is the content of the Book and the message of all the Prophets; this is why it is said that the Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was sent "as a mercy to the worlds" (Q. 21:207)—to remind us that under every dry fallen leaf of ego and passion and grasping and despair lies a priceless gem of God's immediate Presence, a Presence nothing can ever diminish. We have no power to banish that Presence; all we can do is hide ourselves from it. *But why?*

## ḤADĪTH 39

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Make your heart agree with your tongue, your tongue agree with your deeds (*'amal*) and purify your deeds from others than Me. I am jealous and only accept what is offered to Me and Me alone. Verily, the heart of a hypocrite (*munāfiq*) does not agree with his tongue His tongue does not agree with his deeds and his deeds (*'amal*) are for other than God. O son of Adam! Whatever you utter with your words whatever you see with your eyes whatever steps you take there are two angels with you who write both for you and against you. O son of Adam! I did not create you to gather wealth among yourselves. I created you to worship Me humbly and abundantly for long to thank Me a lot and to glorify Me day and night. Verily, your sustenance is already divided. The greedy (*ḥirīṣ*) is deprived. The miser (*bakhīl*) is loathed and worthy of criticism (*madhmūm*). The jealous (*ḥāsid*) is sorrowful (*maghmūm*). The critic (*nāqid*) is Ever-Living and Eternal (*ḥayy qayyūm*). O son of Adam! Serve Me! Verily, I love those who serve Me. Verily, you are a contemptible (*dhalīl*) and powerless (*'ajiz*) servant I am a Glorious and Powerful Lord (*rabb jalīl qawiyy*). Were your brothers to have a simple whiff of your sin they would not sit next to you. Your sins are increasing everyday and your lifespan is decreasing. Do not waste your life in falsehood and carelessness. If you want more [out of life]. Befriend the generous (*arbāb al-qulūb*). Beware of worldly people (*abna' al-dunyā*) and mix with the poor (*masākīn*). O son of Adam! The one whose ark has been destroyed and is back afloat on a piece of wood in the middle of the sea, his difficulties and his hardships are not greater than yours because you are certain of your sins (*dhunūb*). O son of Adam! I approach you by giving you good health (*'āfiyyah*) and by saving you from the scandal caused by your sins (*dhunūb*) yet you distance yourself from me by your sins and attachment to the world thereby destroying your Hereafter (*ākhirah*). O son of Adam! If you do not sit with the successful (*mufliḥīn*) and the righteous (*sāliḥīn*) then how will you succeed? O Moses son of Imrān! Listen carefully to what I say! Unless a servant trusts God people will not feel secure from his evil. Evil means being unjust, cunning, gossiping, and backbitin, injustice, envy, and harm, whether

overt or covert. And tell, O Moses, the unjust not to remember Me for I do not remember them. For, verily, if I remember them, it is for the sake of cursing them. "Verily, he who wishes: let him believe" [18:29]. "And he who wishes: let him disbelieve" [18:29].

## الحديث التاسع والثلاثون

قَالَ اللَّـهُ تَعَالَى: يَا بْنَ آدَمَ اجْعَلْ قَلْبَكَ مُوَافِقاً لِلِسَانِكَ، وَلِسَانَكَ مُوَافِقاً لِعَمَلِك، وَعَمَلَكَ خَالِصاً مِنْ غَيرِي، فَإِنِّي غَيُورٌ لاَ أَقْبَلُ إلاَّ خَالِصاً، فَإِنَّ قَلْبَ الْمُنَافِقِ مُخَالِفٌ لِلِسَانِهِ، وَلِسَانَهُ لِعَمَلِهِ، وَعَمَلَهُ لِغَيْرِ اللَّه. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ مَا تَكَلَّمْتَ بِكَلِمَةٍ، وَلاَ نَظَرْتَ بِنَظْرَةٍ، وَلاَ خَطَوْتَ بِخَطْوَةٍ، إلاَّ وَمَعَكَ مَلَكَانِ يَكْتُبَانِ لَكَ أَوْ عَلَيْكَ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ مَا خَلَقْتُكُمْ لِتَجْمَعُوا الدُّنْيَا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ، بَلْ خَلَقْتُكُمْ لِتَعْبُدُونِي عِبَادَةَ الأَذِلاَّءِ طَوِيلاً، وَتَشْكُرُونِي جَزِيلاً، وَتُسَبِّحُونِي بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلاً، فَإِنَّ الرِّزْقَ مَقْسُومٌ، وَالْحَرِيصَ مَحْرُومٌ، وَالْبَخِيلَ مَذْمُومٌ، وَالْحَاسِدَ مَغْمُومٌ، وَالنَّاقِدَ حَيٌّ قَيُّومٌ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ اُخْدُمْنِي فَإِنِّي أُحِبُّ مَنْ يَخْدُمُنِي، فَإِنَّكَ عَبْدٌ ذَلِيلٌ عَاجِزٌ، وَأَنَا رَبٌّ جَلِيلٌ قَوِيٌّ. لَوْ أَنَّ إِخْوَتَكَ وَجَدُوا رِيحَ ذُنُوبِك لَمَا جَالَسُوكَ، فَذُنُوبُكَ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ فِي الزِّيَادَةِ، وَعُمْرُكَ فِي النُّقصَانِ، وَلاَ تَهْدِمْ عُمْرَكَ فِي الْبَاطِلِ وَالْغَفْلَةِ. فَإِنْ أَرَدْتَ الْمَزِيدَ فَاصْحَبْ أَرْبَابَ الْقُلُوبِ، وَاحْذَرْ مِنْ أَبْنَاءِ الدُّنْيَا، وَخَالِطِ الْمَسَاكِينَ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ مَنِ انْكَسَرَ مَرْكَبُهُ، وَعَادَ عَلى لَوْحٍ مِنَ الْخَشَبِ فِي وَسَطِ الْبَحْرِ، مَا يَكُونُ بِأَعْظَمَ مُصِيبَةً مِنْك، لأَنَّكَ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكَ عَلى يَقِينٍ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ إِنِّي أَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيْكَ بِالْعَافِيَةِ، وَبِسَتْرٍ عَلى ذُنُوبِكَ، وَأَنْتَ تَتَبَغَّضُ إِلَيَّ بِالْمَعَاصِي، وَعِمارَتَكَ الدُّنْيَا وَخَرَابَكَ الآخِرَةَ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ إِذا لَمْ تُجَالِسِ

الْمفْلِدِينَ وَالصَّالِحِينَ، فَمَتَى تَفْلَحُ؟ يَا مُوسَى بْنَ عِمْرَانَ، اسْمَعْ مَا أَقُولُ، إِنَّهُ مَا آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ عَبْدٌ حَتَّى يَأمَنَ النَّاسُ مِنْ شَرِّهِ، يَعْنِي يَأْمَنَ مِنْ ظُلْمِهِ وَكَيْدِهِ، وَمَكْرِهِ وَنَمِيمَتِهِ، وَغَيْبَتِهِ وَبَغْيِهِ، وَحَسَدِهِ وَمَضَرَّتِهِ، وَسِرِّهِ وَعَلانِيَتِهِ. وقُلْ يَا مُوسَى لِلظَّلَمَةِ لاَ تَذْكُرُونِي، فَإِنِّي لاَ أَذْكُرُهُمْ، فَإِنَّ ذِكْرِي لَهُمْ أَنْ أَلْعَنَهُمْ، ﴿فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ"﴾.

If you purify your deeds from *shirk*, so that in all you do, you do only *one thing*, then your words will have measure, discretion, beauty and authority. They will be the words of the Truth, *al-Ḥaqq*. And what the tongue pronounces when God takes over the faculty of speech, the

Heart will know. The tongue that recites the Holy Qur'ān with sincerity and vigilance will make it a *listening* Heart, a Heart that does not only *hear*, but also *heeds*. What is "to heed"? It is to hear and obey. Out of a Heart that heeds One Thing, actions will be performed that accomplish One Thing; out of actions that accomplish One Thing, speech will arise that testifies to One Thing. This is *Islām* (the deeds), *Imān* (the words) and *Iḥsān* (the Heart).

To say what you do not do is hypocrisy; to say what you do not know is foolishness.

To know something but not do it is laziness and cowardice; to know something but not say it (unless it be modesty and courtesy and discretion) is conceit, self-involvement and lack of generosity.

To do what you do not say (unless it be modesty or secret charity) is intrigue and cunning; to do what you do not know is foolhardiness and madness.

When Heart, tongue and deed are not in harmony, this indicates that they have developed egos of their own. Consequently there is war within the *fiṭrah*, and there will soon be war within the *dunyā* because of it. Knowledge takes pride in knowledge, words in words and action in action—which is certainly an ironic state of affairs, since prideful action is ineffective, prideful words empty and deceptive, and prideful knowledge merely another name for ignorance. False speech is as sinful as false action, and possibly even more so, since many destructive actions can grow out of a few twisted words. And false perception is as sinful as lying and deceptive words—possibly even more so, because the most believable and therefore the most destructive lies are those that the liar himself believes to be true.

God did not create us to seek out each other as sources of wealth and collaborate with one another in greed and avarice; to

do so is to turn each other into merchandise to be bought and sold. This is a false, conspiratorial kind of brotherhood, the brotherhood of thieves. But if we recognize God as the Source of all wealth, then we will no longer seek to possess each other and use each other and and store each other up; instead, we will set each other free. Our brotherhood will be based on worship of the same God and exhortation to mutual excellence in that worship; this is the true brotherhood

The greedy one is deprived because he is never content. The miser is condemned because he worships wealth as an idol, an idol he must keep feeding and pampering or he fears it will wither away—but of course it does wither away in the end, for all his feeding and pampering. The jealous one is sorrowful because if another takes something from him he eats his heart out, while if he takes something from another it immediately turns to ashes in his hands. But the one who knows the names of the idols, knows that they are perishing (cf. Q. 28:88), and knows that the *dunyā* is built up, brick, by brick, of idols and nothing else, will see the Face of God and become eternalized and immortal through God's witnessing of him.

A wretched servant is one who serves a magnificent and powerful Lord unwillingly, and so can never avail himself of that power and magnificence. He is *'abd* because he has no choice, but he can never be *khalīfah*. We are all necessarily servants of that Lord, along with the wind and the waters, the rocks and the stars. Even Shaytan serves Him—but he does not serve Him willingly, so all his service is profitless. Nothing stinks to high heaven like a sullen servant, too weak to rebel but too conceited to submit—and that, apparently, is what most of us are. The only recourse for an unfaithful servant like this is to accept generosity from the generous and then extend it, to learn submission from the poor, and to studiously avoid those who can neither give with an open hand nor submit without despising themselves—which is to say, the people of this world. But how can a servant who does not even own himself be generous? Only through the power of poverty, which can hold nothing back because it has nothing to lose.

The one who is shipwrecked on the seas of this world because the timbers of his Heart are broken, leaving it open to

the cruel and ever-shifting waters of earthly life, has at least one virtue left: he knows that he is lost, and would give anything to be found. This is where most of us must begin.

God in His Mercy hides or overlooks our sins, but it seems that all we know how to do, in the case of others, is to bring their sins to light. This is the way of the world, not the way of God. Do we really want others to emulate us in this? How would that be to our advantage? There is a proverb in the West that perfectly illustrates this state of affairs: "People who live in glass houses should not throw stones."

One of the most useful prayers we can pray is: "O God, lead me into the presence of your saints." Words and books can only take us so far toward the Goal, but to sit with a saint is to be in the very Presence of it—a Presence that can explain the nature of the Goal and steps leading to it better than any words, unless they be the words of God in the Holy Qur'ān. And the best *tafsīr* of the Qur'ān is the character of someone who, like Muḥammad—peace and blessings be upon him—has virtually become it.

The saints are those whose trust in God is perfect. Whoever lacks this trust must try to control all the conditions he confronts and all the people he encounters—a hopeless task which results in every transgression: injustice, deception, gossip, backbiting, envying others, injuring them.... Such a person thinks that the sun will not rise on its own unless he is there to threaten and cajole it, and once it does rise he immediately faults it for rising too soon or too late! Whoever tries to remember God while in a state like this, unless he is somehow able to repent of it, will find God's door firmly closed—and immediately leap into the Fire to hide from the shame of it.

## ḤADĪTH 40

God, the Most High, said: O son of Adam! Do not disobey and ask me for forgiveness (*maghfirah*) [at the same time]. O son of Adam! Pray to Me with devotion. Otherwise, I will fill your heart with poverty, your body with difficulties, your chest with grief, and I will not answer your supplications. I will make your worldly existence (*dunyā*) difficult for you and decrease your sustenance (*rizq*). O son of Adam! I am pleased with your daily ritual prayers (*ṣalawāt*) so be pleased with My daily sustenance. O son of Adam! Go slow! Verily, sustenance is divided. The greedy one is deprived. The jealous one is blameworthy. The bounties of this world are not permanent. O son of Adam! Make your ark (*safīnah*) strong. Verily, the ocean (*baḥr*) is deep, deep. And increase your provisions for the steep ascent is insurmountable, insurmountable. O Moses! Verily, the servant (*'abd*) works in this world (*dunyā*) until he is overcaught by death. Then he regrets his past sins and wrongdoings he then asks to return to the world (*dunyā*) in order that he can do righteous deeds (*'amalan ṣāliḥān*). "Our Lord, we have seen and heard, so return us [to the world]; we will work righteousness" [32:12 and allusion to 23:99]. By my Might and Majesty, I shall never disappoint anyone. O Moses! He who places his trust in Me and fears Me reverentially, I will grant him the Garden [of Paradise] (*Jinnah*). O Moses! "This worldly life is only sport, amusement, ornament, and boasting [among yourselves]" [57:20]. For a believer (*mu'min*) there is nothing in this world except worship (*'ibādah*), grief and anxiety. In the Hereafter (*akhirah*) there is the Garden [of Paradise] (*jannah*) [for him].O Moses! The Day of Judgment is difficult (*shadīd*) day. "Fear the Day when no father can avail aught for his son nor a son avail aught for his father" (31:33). How many poor people left their coins in this world? And left it for the Hereafter happy (*masrūrān*) and thankful (*mashkūrān*)? How many wealthy people left their wealth in the world and left it for the Hereafter only to be poor (*faqīr*)? Alone with money, regretting their deeds and collecting their wealth for their heirs (*wārith*). On the Day of Judgment they will get the worst punishment (*'adhād*) and we will punish them more and more for what they were busy acquiring and collecting.

## الحديث الأربعون

قالَ اللّهُ تَعالَى: يَا بْنَ آدَمَ ! لاَ تَعْصِنِي وَلاَ تَسْأَلِ الْمَغْفِرَةَ، يَا بْنَ آدَمَ، تَضَرَّعْ لِعِبَادَتِي، وَإِلاَّ أَمْلأْ قَلْبَكَ فقْراً، وَ بَدَنَكَ تَعَباً وَصَدْرَكَ هَمّاً، وَلاَ أُجِيبُ دُعَاءَكَ وَأَجْعَلُ دُنْيَاكَ عُسْرَةً وَرِزْقَكَ قَلِيلاً. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ، أَنَا رَاضٍ بِصَلَوَاتِكَ يَوْماً فَيَوْماً، فَارْضَ عَنِّي بِقُوتِكَ يَوْماً فَيَوْماً. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ، مَهْلاً فَإِنَّ الرِّزْقَ مَقْسُومٌ، وَالْحَرِيصُ مَحْرُومٌ، وَالْحَاسِدُ مَذْمُومٌ، وَالنِّعْمَةُ لاَ تَدُومُ. يَا بْنَ آدَمَ، اِسْتَحْكِمْ سَفِينَةً فَإِنَّ الْبَحْرَ عَمِيقٌ عَمِيقٌ، وَأَكْثِرْ مِنَ الزَّادِ فَإِنَّ الْعَقَبَةَ كَؤُودٌ كَؤُودٌ. يَا مُوسَى، إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ يَعْمَلُ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَتَّى يُدْرِكَهُ الْمَوْتُ فَيَنْدَمُ عَلى مَا سَلَفَ مِنَ الذُّنوبِ وَالْخَطَايَا، وَيَسْأَلُ الرَّجْعَةَ إِلَى الدُّنْيَا لِيَعْمَلَ عَملاً صَالِحاً: ۩"رَبَّنَا أَبْصِرْنَا وَسَمِعْنَا فَارْجِعْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحاً إِنَّا مُوقِنُونَ"۩ (32: 12)، فَوَعِزَّتِي وَجَلاَلِي لاَ أَرُدُّ أَحَداً أَبَداً، يَا مُوسَى مَنْ سَرَّنِي وَاتَّقَى مِنِّي أَعْطَيْتُهُ الْجَنَّةَ، يَا مُوسَى، الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ، وَلَيْسَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ فِيْهَا إِلاَّ الْعِبَادَةُ وَالْهَمُّ وَالغَمُّ، وَفِي الآخِرَةِ الْجَنَّةُ. يَا مُوسَى، الْقِيَامَةُ يَوْمٌ شَدِيدٌ لاَ يُغْنِي وَالِدٌ عَنْ وَلَدِهِ شَيْئاً، وَلاَ مَوْلُودٌ عَنْ وَالِدِهِ شَيْئاً، كَمْ مِنْ فَقِيرٍ تَرَكَ نَقْدَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا، وَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا إِلَى الآخِرَةِ مَسْرُوراً وَمَشْكُوراً. وَكَمْ مِنْ غَنِيٍّ قَدْ تَرَكَ مَالَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا، وَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا إِلَى الآخِرَةِ وَهُوَ فَقِيرٌ، وَحِيدٌ مِنْ مَالِهِ، وَ نَادِمٌ عَلى عَمَلِهِ، وَجَمَعَ

مَالَهُ لِوَارِثِهِ، وَكَانَ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَذَاباً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ؛ زِدْنَاهُمْ عَذَاباً فَوْقَ العَذَابِ بِما كانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ .

Those who ask God for forgiveness for their sins only in order to confirm and preserve those sins are lost. If you want Him to forgive you, ask Him to forgive you the sin of your existence—which, among your many transgressions, is a sin like no other.

God has mercy on us, we feel His power for a moment, so we draw our sword and set out to cut down all the difficulties of life—but, sadly enough, they only multiply.

Look at the power of humility, look what it can accomplish: it removes poverty, difficulty and grief, it opens the door to God's sustenance and makes Him happy to answer our supplications. Other than the virtue of humility, He requires little from us; likewise humility makes us content with little.

The greedy, the jealous and those who dig themselves deeper into this world, looking for gold—these three divide the sustenance God has provided for them by investing it with dishonest partners who never pay it back, thieves who disappear and are never seen again. The greedy sell nearness and purchase distance, since they are always thinking about what is beyond their reach. The jealous sell contentment and buy starvation, since they define themselves as fundamentally deprived. The good they possess is worthless to them; the only thing they see any value in is the good that belongs to someone else—and as soon as it passes into their hands, it loses all its attraction for them. And those who see this world as the source of value will sell all they have so they can buy title to a played-out gold mine—spend their lives digging and sweating in it—and finally die at the bottom of the shaft.

What is the ark? Your Heart! Caulk it well, or it will leak and let in the world.

What is the mountain? The Path! On your own you can never climb it—unless God throws you a rope. That is the sole provision for your ascent: His Mercy and His help.

Beware of relying upon your own efforts. If work is all you know you will die in harness, with the field less than half plowed, and not yet planted. If work does not ready you for Mercy, it will only ready you for the grave. If the believer has

nothing but worship, grief and anxiety, then let his worship eat up his grief and anxiety. Do not labor for a goal; instead, see labor as courtesy before God, as the act of not taking His generosity for granted.

The one who dies before he is made to die, and has therefore seen God, will be given both the power to regret his past wrongdoings, and a chance to do things right this time around. He will stop digging himself always deeper into debt—and when he gives away his Heart, and receives God as the price of it, all his past debts will be paid.

O lawgiver! Do not dedicate your life to nothing better than meticulously fulfilling the law. To fulfill the law is not labor for hire, it is not a commercial transaction. Rather, it is gratitude to God that he cared enough to provide the law, and make it easy for you (cf. Q. 2:185).

Those who spend their lives amassing money, and can think of nothing else—what can be said about them? They will buy forty automobiles, then seventy. They will construct towers reaching to heaven, and then discover that the elevators do not work. They will spend vast sums to purchase racehorses, as if they had never read the *Sūrah al-'Ādiyāt*. They will amass so much gold that they will eventually have to start eating it. No one has less imagination, no one is more at a loss to determine just what, if anything, immense wealth might actually be good for, than the person who has spent his or her life doing what is called "making" money. What have they made, really, but a wall of human bones to keep out the Angel of Death?

But Death is already here, inside the palace, inside the fortress, inside the bunker. Why not ask him what his price is? See if you can find out how much gold it might take to satisfy him (cf. Q. 104:19). Carry on the most exhaustive and painstaking research your great riches can fund.

Wealth in this world is poverty in the next—which is to say that idolatry of money, power and worldly position is evidence of a fundamental lack of human substance.

Poverty in this world is wealth in the next; whoever empties his Heart of this world will find it full of the Presence of God—full to overflowing. And the next world is here with us, even now.

## About the Contributors

Ayatullāh Ḥasan Shīrazī (1937-1983) was born in Iraq into a distinguished family of religious scholars who descend from Imām Ḥusayn. A prolific author, he rose to become a respected religious authority. He was martyred in Damascus, Syria, by agents of Ṣaddām Ḥusayn.

Dr. John Andrew Morrow (al-Ustādh al-Duktūr Ilyās Islām) is a Métis Canadian academic, senior scholar of Islām and a full professor of foreign languages. He is the author of *The Covenants of the Prophet Muḥammad with the Christians of the World* and numerous other works.

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